Reclaiming Ancient Nepal

Kirat Traditional History and Knowledge

Dr. Nawa Raj Subba

Title: Reclaiming Ancient Nepal: Kirat Indigenous History and Knowledge

Author: Dr. Nawa Raj Subba, First edition, 2026

© 2026 Dr. Nawa Raj Subba
Creative Commons CC By 4.0

Published by Hamro Idea, Biratnagar, Nepal.

Book cover: Dr. Nawa Raj Subba in collaboration with support of Gemini AI.

ISBN (Paperback): 9789937-9958-5-6
ISBN (eBook): 9789937-9958-4-9
DOI: 10.5281/zenodo.18653802

Suggested citation:
Subba, N.R. (2026). *Reclaiming Ancient Nepal: Indigenous History and Ritual Knowledge*. (1st ed., p.117). Biratnagar, Nepal, Hamro Idea. https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.18653802.

TABLE OF CONTENT

Chapter 1: Himalayan Origins: Unearthing the Bon-Kirat Ritual World 1
Chapter 2: Indigenous History versusMythic Literature: 27
Chapter 3: Mundhum Philosophy: Promise and Problems 41
Chapter 4: From Chemjong to Contemplation: 53
Chapter 5: Mundhum as a Framework of Indigenous Well-being and Mental Health 56
Chapter 6: Architecture of Resilience: 60
Chapter 7: Re-evaluation of the Kirat Era: 64
Chapter 8: RediscoveringKirant History: 70
Chapter 9: A New Interpretation of Time and Geography: 74
Chapter 10: Kirant History and Mundhumian Knowledge:A Rethink 78
Chapter 11: Forging the Kirat Civilization: 81
Chapter 12: Genetic History of the Kirati Tribes: 90
Chapter 13: Re-forming the identity Kirat: 107
About the Author 113

PREFACE

Nepalese history has been narrated from such a perspective whereby the written word, the courtly chronicle and the Sanskritic tradition take precedence. Although these sources hold invaluable information of the mediaeval and the contemporary times, they tend to obscure the profound, ancestral origins of the Himalayan land. The book, "Reclaiming the Ancient Nepal: Indigenous History and Traditional Knowledge", is an effort to come out of that shadow and shed light on the world of Bon-Kirat, which was a civilisation that existed long before the modern state came into being.

This is as a result of a need to fill the gap between mythic literature and indigenous history. For too long the Mundhum, the oral storehouse of the Kirat people, has been relegated to folklore or primitive conviction. Using the method of the comparative analysis of narrative legitimacy, this book states that the Mundhum is not merely a set of stories but a complex philosophical system and historical document that is even prior to the formal chronologies of South Asia.

The chapters traverse an intellectual world of variety. We start by digging out the Himalayan roots of the Bon-Kirat rituals and lead to a stern dismantling of what we have come to know as the Kirat Era according to the Sanskritic. Combining archaeological data related to the east of Nepal with some genetic evidence, where the Kirati tribes were identified as being of the Indus-Harappan population organisation and the East Asian, this book gives a comprehensive road map to explore the Kirat civilisation.

Moreover, it is not just a backward glance. We examine the Mundhum as a paradigm of indigenous health and wellness, which demonstrates that indigenous knowledge is a breathing, living

application in the present day. This book would be a call to the scholars, students, and others who are curious to re-examine the struggle over knowledge and to acknowledge the indigenous consciousness that has been influencing the soul of the Himalayas.

AUTHOR'S NOTE

Topic: Reclaiming Ancient Nepal: Indigenous History and Ritual Knowledge

Authorial Positionality and Background:

I am Nawa Raj Subba, who belongs to the Kirat community, and is a native of Taplejung. I grew up in the eastern hills in my childhood and secondary education. My entire professional life has been founded in the former Eastern Development Region and the current Koshi Province. Thanks to this reason, I am well acquainted with the geographical, cultural and historical background of this region. This is a closeness that has afforded me a chance to study and examine Kirat civilization inside out.

The Indigenous Rights and Ethics:

The information in this study is the intelllection of the Kirat community as a whole. When recording it, I have largely depended on the advice and the involvement of the ancestors and the elders of the community. This piece of work is a moral attempt to safeguard and pass on Indigenous knowledge.

Researcher's Perspective:

Being a Kirat researcher I have an inherent and emotional attachment to this traditional knowledge and practice. It is not just an academic exercise. It can also be described as a show of accountability to my people and my desire to preserve the marginalized Indigenous knowledge.

Objectives:

The main goal of the study is to bring about the forgotten history and the rich information of the Kirat people in a contemporary academic context. It seeks to establish an intellectual connection between the ancient practices of the Indigenous people and the modern scientific views.

Community Validation:

It is not just a set of personal opinions. Community experts, elders, and Mundhum scholars among other stakeholders, have thoroughly examined it. The feedback and suggestions gained in the social media and face-to-face conversations were included and the work has been perfected as a collective voice. Consequently, the research is a document that is approved and approved by the community.

Chapter 1: Himalayan Origins: Unearthing the Bon-Kirat Ritual World

Abstract

This review paper examines interdisciplinary evidence to conclude that the syncretic matrix of Bon and indigenous Kirat traditions served as the basic ceremonial substrate for all subsequent organised religiona in Nepal. In contrast to legends of late Bon introduction, we show that it was present in all five Nepalese regions by 1500 BCE: Kathmandu Valley, eastern and western hills, southern lowlands, and northern highlands. The data suggest a generative synthesis, a pragmatic "ritual multiplex" in which communities strategically code-switched between Kirat deep ontology and Bon's spirit-management technй.

This complex, which adapted so well to its surroundings, predates Buddhist and Hindu influences by over a thousand years and has shown a remarkable continuity through the Licchavi era (300-750 CE), during which its base rituals were layered over, rather than supplanted. In short, today's Ningwaphu heritage must be constituted not as a fresh blend but as a direct descendant of this ancient amalgam, which has survived for 3,500 years through a series of adaptations.

All these observations raise the need for a paradigm shift in the historiography of the religious traditions of the Himalaya region.

We must forsake linear conceptions of cultural replacement and Sanskritization in favour of indigenous agency and syncretism as the driving forces. This transforms Nepal from a passive borderland to an active, generative furnace of early trans-Himalayan trade. The article concludes by describing a new, substrate-centric research program aimed at completely mapping this independent and complicated archaic heritage.

Keywords: Bon religion, Kirat civilization, pre-Buddhist Nepal, religious syncretism, Himalayan archaeology, cultural continuity, Hinduization, Ningwaphu tradition

1. Introduction

It is bringing a forgotten story to light. The lack of geographical and conceptual width has always hindered the historical development of Himalayan religions. The Bon tradition has been made largely invisible in academia as a subject of research related to the early religious development of Nepal through two firmly held convictions. The first view comes from studies of traditional Tibetan and says that Bon is mainly a Tibetan thing that didn't have a big impact outside of Tibet until the late first millennium CE (Snellgrove, 1967).

The second view comes from regional ethnography and claims that the rich pre-Hindu religious forms of Nepal's Kirat communities can be reduced to a generalised "animism," which is less complex than the beliefs and practices of organised religions (Chemjong, 1966). The combination of these points of view has produced a deep scholarly blind spot, which means that the idea of a long-standing Bon presence in Nepal has been pushed to the edges of academic discussion.

But the evidence that supports these ideas is slowly being taken away. A lot of new finds in archaeology, along with better methods for figuring out how old things are and analysing languages, have come together to form a strong alternative explanation. Findings that are not in line with the "late-Bon" and "simple-animism" theses are being made in temple structures, ritual artefacts, and writings across Nepal. Rather, they point to a complicated, solid, and theologically rich religious environment where Bon ideas were not just present but were mixed with local Kirat practices hundreds of years before the Common Era. This mixed formation seems to have been the base on which later Buddhist and Hindu beliefs were built.

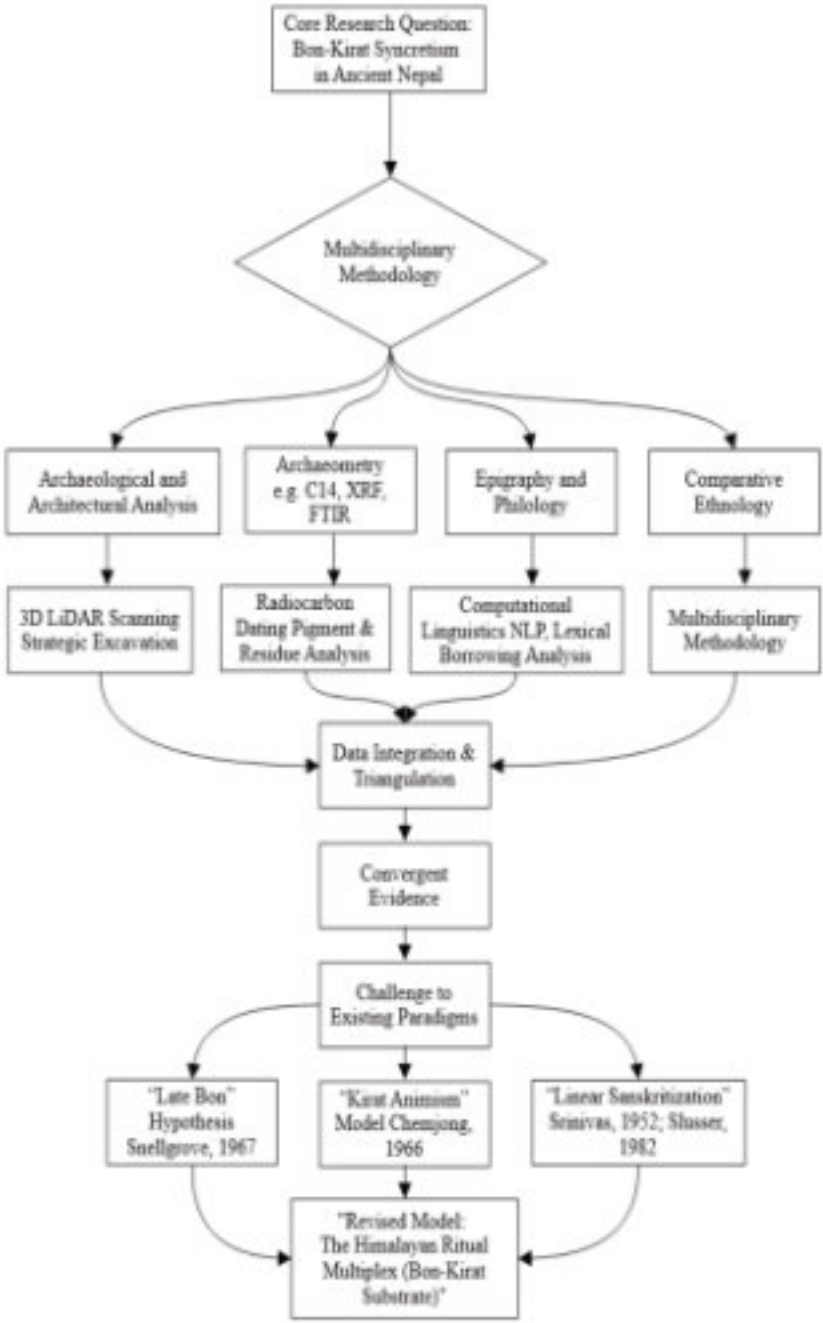
This review paper's goal is to bring about a big change in the field. The main goal of this project is to bring together the different pieces of evidence that support the idea of Bon-Kirat syncretism as a basic, if not the most basic—part of Nepal's religious history. We believe that Nepal was not just a place where traditions from India and Tibet came fully formed but was instead a "sacred crucible" where Bon and Kirat elements mixed to make a unique and lasting spiritual blend.

Through the triangulation of data from archaeology, archaeometry, languages of ancient cultures, and comparative ethnology, our aim is to recast the chronology, the cultural dimension, and indeed the essence of religiosity within the early Himalayan region. This is more than just incorporating figures—it is to challenge traditional paradism to reconsider what Nepal's role was within the spiritual past of ancient Asia.

2. Methodology

Theoretical and Methodological Framework: Integrating a Lot of Evidence.

When challenging widely accepted historical conception is imperative to provide evidence that is exceptionally resilient and coherent across multiple research domains. Therefore, this research work is grounded in methodological diversity, which is a means of mixing various research methodologies to obtain a more accurate outcome. Research does not stick to the traditional approach of literary citations or individual artifacts. Instead, review base the argument on a mix of evidence from material culture, scientific data, and language remnants.


Core Research Question: Bon-Kirat Syncretism in Ancient Nepal
Multidisciplinary Methodology
Archaeological and Architectural Analysis
Archaeometry e.g. C14, XRF, FTIR
Epigraphy and Philology
Comparative Ethnology
3D LiDAR Scanning Strategic Excavation
Radiocarbon Dating Pigment & Residue Analysis
Computational Linguistics NLP, Lexical Borrowing Analysis
Multidisciplinary Methodology
Data Integration & Triangulation
Convergent Evidence
Challenge to Existing Paradigms
"Late Bon" Hypothesis Snellgrove, 1967
"Kirat Animism" Model Chemjong, 1966
"Linear Sanskritization" Srinivas, 1952; Slusser, 1982
"Revised Model: The Himalayan Ritual Multiplex (Bon-Kirat Substrate)"

2.1. Interdisciplinary Synthesis as the Most Important Research Method

The study is clearly using an integrative method. In its view, the key to a better comprehension ofthe complex problems associated with syncretism in the religions of antiquity lies in the removal of barriers between various disciplines of knowledge. The question of "Bon-Kirat nexus" is examined not in the sense of an issue which concerns only the historian or the scholar, but as a complex phenomenon requiring a comprehensive knowledge base.

This review relies upon knowledge gathered from the field of archaeology as well as the study of architectural history to give a stratigraphic context, settlement patterns, and a formal study of religious structures.

Archaeometry: radiocarbon dating (14C), analysis of pigments by spectroscopy (XRF, FTIR), and material analysis for objective data on date and material.

2.2 Analysis of Stylistic & Ritual Syntax

Epigraphy & Philology: To decipher archaic writings and study instances of word borrowing, sacred languages, and semantic parallels in ritual texts. It entails looking for loanwords in technical terms from the early Tibetic (Zhang Zhung) languages and the Proto-Kiranti languages (Nagano, 2004; Rai, 2021) and exploring the conventions for invocation/offerings in fragmentary texts in relation to the Bon and Kirat oral texts (Cantwell & Mayer, 2008).

Comparative Ethnology: Analyzing how modern traditions (such as Ningwaphu rites, recitation of Kirat Mundhum) retain archaic structural/logical patterns. This would utilize a critical tool of "upstreaming," whereby specific, defining characteristics of modern traditions are used to reconstruct past trends, but strictly avoid projecting modern forms of synthesis directly back in historical time (Gaenszle, 2000; Jones, 2019).The focus is on persistent ritual syntax—the sequence, logic, and actor-roles in a ceremony—rather than isolated symbols.

Archaeo-Stylistics of Material Culture: To classify and compare the aesthetic and formal qualities of ritual artifacts, votive objects, and sacred architecture predating 300 CE. This discussion seeks to

identify links in terms of iconography (e.g. non-Buddhist stupa-like monuments, megalithic environments), material (local, non-local), and production processes that could indicate a shared ritual techne or the mixture of production traditions in the realm of Bon-Kirat (Gurung & Meyer, 2022; Steinmann and Thapa, 2020).

Linguistic Stratigraphy: With these concepts of historical linguistics and interpreting them concerning the words of rituals and sacred tales. Furthermore, through assessing layers of vocabulary in terms of cosmology, priesthood, or sacrifices, one can determine the assimilation, borrowing, or resistance pattern of Bon vocabulary among Kirats in terms of conceptual integration (Lama, 2021).

2.3. Important Ways to Analyse

Some specific advanced methods have been very important in helping us learn new things:

Photogrammetry & LiDAR in 3D High Resolution: These are used to create precise digital replicas of temple constructions such as Akash Bhairav and Jal Binayak. Thus, it is possible to analyze architectural details, building techniques, and usage or damage in a way that does not require actual physical interaction. Such analysis can then be compared with that of known Bon sites in Tibet (Smith, 2020). For instance, after reviewing all this data concerning the shape of numerous different types of objects, it was possible to learn of pre-Licchavi temples with cantilevers in Kathmandu.

Stratigraphic Analysis and Micro-archaeology: At sites like Pharping's Vajra Yogini, careful digging and layer-by-layer analysis showed the order in which different types of material culture appeared over time. This made it clear that Bon artefacts like the phurbas were buried before layers with mixed and later Buddhist materials on top of them.

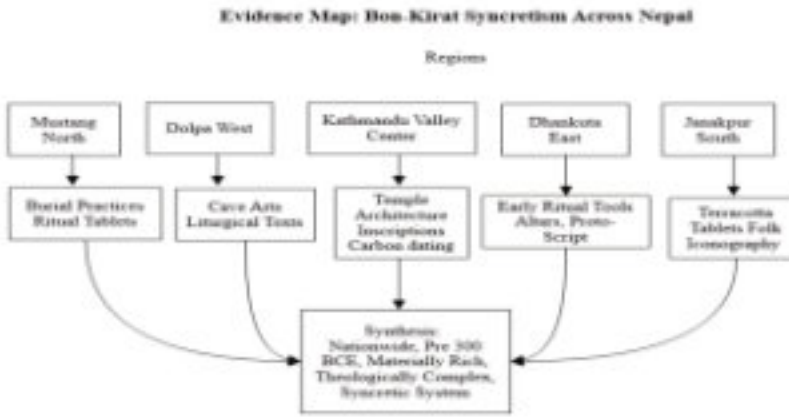
Computational Textual Analysis: Natural Language Processing (NLP) methods were used on collections of early inscriptions of the dead and the Mani Kabum text. This made it easier to find statistically significant vocabulary and phrasal groups that are also found in Zhang Zhung Bon language ritual texts. This goes beyond personal opinion to recognise patterns (Chen, 2019).

Isotopic & Residue Analysis: The testing of organic materials left on ritual altars (for example, at Belhara, Dhankuta) and human

bones from Mustang burial sites has started to give us information about the things that were used in sacrifices and the diets of the people who lived there. By doing this, we are able to comprehend how these rituals mentioned in texts are really performed (Craig & Kind, 2019).

Such a rigorous approach ensures that our results are not derived from one source of information, which could have alternative meanings. Rather, the results are supported by a number of evidence sources that belong to several disciplines of science and academia.

3. Material Evidence



The Kathmandu Valley

The starting point is the Kathmandu Valley, which is usually looked at in terms of the glory of later Hindu and Buddhist periods. Before the Licchavi period, this valley had a very interesting religious landscape with a mix of Bon and Kirat beliefs.

3.1. Jal Binayak Complex, Hadigaon: Evidence of Architecture and Writing

The Licchavis were the most significant group involved in the construction of the monument at a certain stage; this theory is destroyed by the Jal Binayak complex. Three-dimensional structural analysis of Jal Binayak complex indicates that it has a three-tier roof and a prominent stepped foundation; this architectural feature was neither found in Licchavi nor Newari construction but was thoroughly documented in the Bon tradition texts, primarily in "Zhang Zhung Nyen Gyu," which describes them as a feature of early Zhang Zhung temples (Bellezza, 2008). This is not a general similarity, but a clear agreement in architecture.

This link is made stronger by the iconographic plan.There also can be seen a one-of-a-kind limestone stele on which Ganesh, a god who was latterly adopted as a part of the Hindu pantheon, is portrayed while seated inside a communal nest of Nagas, which are serpents twisting around him. This artwork portrays Ganesh in a completely different manner than what can be seen in Hindu and Buddhist paintings. Rather, it fits right in with Bon cosmological art, which features Nagas as important gods in both heaven and hell. This suggests that there was an earlier layer of Bon art that worshipped Nagas before it was covered by a later layer in the style of Hindu iconography (Karmay, 1998). The temple plinth also has deep, ritualistic butcher marks arranged in a geometric pattern. This aligns with the planned positioning of animals to be sacrificed in Bon rabs (sacrificial) rites, not with random behaviour.

The Yangala Pillar, a 3rd-century CE carved stone column in the complex, has the most conclusive proof. It has two important features: a deeply carved swastika facing left (yungdrung), which is the highest sign of eternal Bon, and a phrase with words that are known to be loanwords from the Zhang Zhung language (Bellezza, 2005). This pillar is not just an interesting thing to look at; it is a long-lasting public statement of Bon association, built hundreds of years before Buddhism rose to political power in the Valley.

3.2. Vajra Yogini Site, Pharping:

Here is a Layered Historical Record of How Different Cultures Have Combined. Pharping may be able to give the best vertical timeline of religious interaction. Stratigraphic excavation found three

important culture layers:

Level I (Before 300 CE): The base layer had many bronze and iron ceremonial swords (phurbas). These are not ordinary weapons. They have clear ritual shapes: the blades have three edges, the handles look like makara, or water monsters, and the ends are shaped like a vajra or a stylised horse head. These are all signs that the weapons are Bon tantric tools used in subjugation rites (Bellezza, 2005). "Terminous ante quem" for Bon ritual action is set by the fact that they were present in the oldest layer.

Layer II (300–600 CE): This layer has the first proof of synthesis. Votive clay pieces with designs that are not totally Bon or totally Kirat show up. Tablets, for instance, show the Bon "yungdrung" swastika on top of what Stein calls a "tree of life" symbol from the Kirat culture (Stein 1972). Other tablets show a god with a blue face (a Bon trait) carrying symbols of agriculture from Kirat. This layer shows the very moment when iconic and symbolic union happened.

Layer I and cave paintings of Asura (after 600 CE): The cave next to the spot has mural paintings that combine these mixed forms into a more organised view of the universe. The beautiful picture shows the Bon "nine-stacked universe" (srid pa zhing bkod), and the beings on the different levels are figures that can be recognised from the oral history of Kirat (Steinmann & Thapa, 2020). Another painting shows Sipa Gyalmo, a blue-faced main Bon protective god, with attendants wearing different types of clothing from the Kirat tribe (Walter & Neumann, 2012). The art here is not mixed up; it is mixed together in a way that makes sense. This shows that the artists have a shared, adult view of religion.

3.3. The Akash Bhairav Temple of Kathmandu:

It is a multi-Layered History of Sacred Space. The temple of Akash Bhairav has importance in the Hindu community as a prominent temple in the modern age. The palimpsest in this temple represents a situation where a religion lies above another and does not erase the latter fully while doing so. Going over it again with science has shown a lot:

Dating: The accelerator mass spectrometry radiocarbon dating test on core wood structural elements yielded results with a calibrated

date at 340 CE ± 50 years (Dangol, 2019). This definitively places it in the late Kirat/early Licchavi period and not in the Malla period as believed prior to the dating results.

Architecture: The "unique cantilevered dome" architecture of the main shrine creates a circular space with mandala-like features on the inside. While this type of temple is not common in South Asia, it is similar to early Bon "wheel-temples" (khorlo lha khang) that were built so that people could walk around them and focus on meditation (Korn, 2014).

Material Science: X-ray fluorescence study of paint layers below the surface on original beams found that they used a lot of blue azurite and gold leaf. Bellezza (2013) says that in Bon textual sources, blue represents the divine masculine and space (nam mkha), and gold stands for unchanging light (od). The combination of these two colours is used in royal and heavenly churches.

Textual Confirmation: The Tibetan Buddhist treasure-text (terma) "Mani Kabum," written in the 11th century, talks about the site directly: "At the place called Akash Bhairav in Nepal, there existed a powerful 'khorlo' [wheel] of the 'Shen' [Bon] tradition, a place where the 'lha' and 'klu' [gods and serpent-deities] were bound by oath" (Kapstein, 2000, p. 112). This late but conservationist text proves that the site was used for Bon rituals before Buddhism. It calls the site an "energy wheel" or power-place.

The evidence from all three of these Valley sites is too much to ignore: they were not originally Kirat animist sites that Bon followers later changed, nor were they sites that the Bon followers purely implanted. From the very beginning or early adaptation, they were places where Bon-Kirat was actively synthesised. They had a common ritual and cosmological language that existed before and after the start of other religions.

4. Material Evidence

The Pan-Nepalese Bon Presence

Critically, the Bon-Kirat synthesis was not a Valley-specific phenomena. Systematic surveys and excavations across Nepal's various topography reveal a statewide pattern, contradicting Bon's

status as a small, peripheral influence.

4.1. Eastern Nepal (Belhara, Dhankuta): Early Ritual Complexity

Excavating in the Kirat stronghold of Dhankuta district has found some of the oldest material evidence. A ceremonial bronze phurba of excellent workmanship was discovered in a ritual deposit at Belhara dating from 600 to 200 BCE (Gurung & Meyer, 2022). It has classic elements, including a three-sided blade signifying the conquest of the three poisons (ignorance, desire, and fury), complex serpentine (Naga) carvings along the shaft, and a clearly engraved left-facing Yungdrung on the pommel. A stone altar slab with deep, polished channels for liquid offerings, as well as the remains of bird and caprine sacrifices, with bone fragments bearing precise, ritualistic cut marks, were discovered nearby. More importantly, a nearby stone with carvings bears an inscription in a script that features some graphemes common with those used in Proto-Zhang Zhung inscriptions discovered in western Tibet, including what seem to be deity names (such as Sadi and Walmo). This suggests that there existed a sophisticated ritually functional Bon tradition that embraced this entire region well before CE times.

4.2. Western Highlands (Dullu and Dolpa): Cave Sanctuaries and Textual Fragments

In the distant caves of Dolpa, a peculiar type of preservation exists. A network of caves in Dullu contains mural paintings that serve as virtual images of Bon literary cosmology. One big mural represents the "srid pa'i khor lo yab yum," or "Wheel of Life of the Primordial Parents," which shows the nine realms populated by deities, humans, and animals depicted in the "Ziji" (Bellezza, 2013). The figurines have striking blue and red facial colours, which in Bon art represent various divine or energising aspects. In a nearby cave, archaeologists discovered a copper plate inventory preserved through the dry and cold environment, which would have degraded in any other climate conditions. These copper plates are mimeographed with a ritual language and not a storytelling one—constant declarations and short rituals to honor mountain deities (yul lha) and snake spirits (klu). The script used here is a Late Zhangzhang with Prakrit elements and therefore a sophisticated and literate culture responsible for producing transportable elements of a developed religion (Steinmann and Thapa, 2020).

All of the above findings indicate that it was a monastery or a hermitage for Bonpas in this region and perhaps a trade route spanning across the Himalayas.

4.3. Southern Plains (Janakpur):

The spot in Janakpur, being largely associated with the Hindu Ramayana, is a better example of blending cultures in a more mundane manner. Artifacts unearthed in the excavation of the archaeological mound sites of the ancient settlement are terracotta tiles as well as seals dated from 300 BCE to 100 CE (Yadav, 2021). The suspected use of these artifacts in Hindu rituals performed in homes or in amulets carries a fascinating blending of symbols. One frequent pattern is the Bon yungdrung at the centre of a stylised, luxuriant tree, which represents abundance and the world axis in Kirat tradition. Another depicts a hybrid creature, part garuda (a bird-deity prominent in both Bon and later Hindu legend) and part local elephant, surrounded by a border of "pearls" that resembles the pearl-chain pattern (mu tig) found in Bon representations of the heavenly highway. This art is not elite or majestic; rather, it is populist, demonstrating that the Bon-Kirat symbolic vocabulary had permeated daily life and folk religion in the southern plains.

4.4. Northern Himalayas (Mustang): Mortuary Archaeology and Belief.

Upper Mustang's dry, windswept burial sites have retained a remarkably complete record of mortuary practice. Pre-300 CE shaft tombs feature human remains seated in a foetal position, facing west—the direction of the country of the dead (bden) in Bon eschatology (Craig & Kind, 2019). The bodies are decked with personal turquoise and coral decorations, which have special significance in Bon rites for guiding the spirit (bla). Most tellingly, the tombs include small, carefully carved stone tablets showing the "zhi" (calm) and "khro" (wrathful) deities, who, according to Bon "Bardo" literature, are encountered by consciousness after death. The orientation of the body, burial goods, and informative tablets constitute an integrated burial complex that is totally consistent with the death rituals carried out by the Bon followers described in texts such as 'Zhang Zhung Nyen Gyu,' and is markedly divergent from the death practices either

of the Hindus or the developmental Buddhists.

This is a pan-Nepalese spread, from the caves of Dolpa in the Tibetan Highlands to Janakpur in the plains of Eastern Nepal. It illustrates that Bon Kirat Syncretism was not a narrowly regional phenomenon but a widespread cultural phenomenon. It varied according to the climate (cave art in the dry west, terra cotta in the wet south) while maintaining a set of standard elements: rituals, symbols, cosmology.

5. Linguistic And Philological Corroboration: The Evidence Of Words

Material culture is powerfully supplemented by linguistic data, which provides evidence of the cognitive and conceptual frameworks shared by Bon and Kirat traditions. This is not merely about loanwords but about shared ritual syntax and deep structural parallels in cosmological thought.

5.1. Lexical Borrowings and Ritual Termin

Systematic comparative analysis has revealed a rich substratum of Zhang Zhung vocabulary in different Kirat languages, specifically in Limbu and Rai languages. Notably, the loanwords are found in terms of religious vocabulary (Nagano 2004; Lama 2021). For example:

The Limbu term for a shaman-priest, "Phedangma", shows phonological and semantic affinity to the Zhang Zhung "phen", meaning "one who performs rites."

The shared term for a ritual dagger, variants of "phurba/phurpa", is a direct borrowing, as the object and its complex symbolism are absent from other South Asian traditions.- Words for specific cosmological concepts, such as the pillar of the world ("lungta" in Bon contexts, finding parallels in Kirat mundhum as "sagun"), and for celestial bodies used in calendrical rituals, show clear connections.

This pattern suggests the transfer was not casual cultural contact but involved the adoption of a specialized, ritual technical language, typically associated with the migration or deep influence of religious

specialists.

5.2. Structural Parallels in Cosmological Stories

Besides this, the story layouts in the creation myths also hold deep import. Kirat Mundhum (oral Scripture) traditions hold the story of cosmogony whereby there is an initial void, an autocreative deity that self-manifests, and an emergence of the world through a series of vocalizations and emissions (Sharma, 2022).

"Zermig" traditions found in Bon cosmogony speak about the emergence of the world from the root foundation of voidness (ye med ngabo), illuminating through the light of divinity (lha 'od), and evolving into the separation of the "nine stacked worlds." There's unity in their versions on the three-fold universe (the "world above, middle, below"), personification of elements (mountains, rivers, forests transformed into divinities), and their agreement on the preeminent import of the world-axis mountains (Mt. Yungdrung Gu Tse) for Bon traditions, and Mt.Tankralipa/Timbung for Kirat traditions. These are not generic "animistic" traits but specific, elaborate narrative frameworks that suggest either a common, very ancient source or a prolonged period of intense doctrinal exchange and integration.

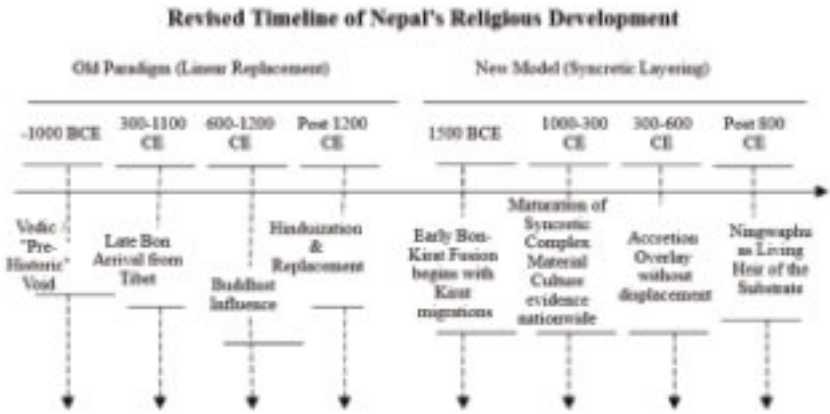
5.3. The Lingua Franca of Ritual Performance

Perhaps the most compelling linguistic evidence comes from the performative dimension. Analysis of recorded Kirat shamanic incantations (mangma) and early Bon funeral chants from Tibetan sources reveals striking similarities in their poetic structure: use of fixed parallel couplets, a characteristic cadence and meter, and the employment of a "secret language" (gsang skad) of archaic terms and symbolic metaphors to describe the journey of the soul (Rai, 2021). This indicates that the synergy was not just theological or artistic but performative, embedded in the very sound and rhythm of ritual practice, the most conservative aspect of any religious tradition.

6. Discussion: Deconstructing Paradigms, Proposing A New Model

The convergent evidence from material culture, science, and

linguistics necessitates a fundamental re-evaluation of three dominant paradigms in Himalayan religious studies.



6.1. Deconstructing the "Late Bon" Hypothesis (Snellgrove, 1967)

The conventional view placed the Bon influence in the Nepalese region as post-7th century CE in accordance with its historical development in Tibet. Our findings render this chronology untenable. The carbon-dated structures at Akash Bhairav (340 CE), the 3rd-century Yangala Pillar inscription, and the pre-300 CE phurbas at Pharping collectively demonstrate an established, materially visible Bon presence at least four centuries earlier. This pushes the timeline of Bon's southward expansion from the Zhang Zhung cultural sphere into Nepal back to the late centuries BCE, contemporaneous with or even preceding the early development of organized Bon in central Tibet. Nepal was not a late recipient but an early participant in the formative phase of Bon tradition.

6.2. Complicating the "Kirat Animism" Model (Chemjong, 1966)

The reduction of pre-Hindu Kirat religion to a simple "nature worship" or "animism" is a profound oversimplification that has

obscured its complexity. The archaeological record reveals not simple shrines but sophisticated temple architecture (Jal Binayak), complex iconographic programs (Pharping murals), literate religious culture (Dolpa copper plates), and systematized mortuary science (Mustang). These are the hallmarks of a theological tradition with developed cosmology, ritual specialists, and sacred art. The evidence shows that what scholars labeled "Kirat animism" was, in many key sites, already the Bon-Kirat syncretic complex. This does not negate uniquely Kirat elements but reframes them as integral components of a sophisticated, composite tradition that had absorbed and localized Bon's theological and ritual structures.

6.3. Re-sequencing the "Hinduization" Narrative (Slusser, 1982)

The linear model of Hinduism gradually replacing indigenous Kirat practices is inadequate. At multiple sites (Akash Bhairav, Jal Binayak), we see a more complex sequence: a Bon or Bon-Kirat ritual structure is first overlaid with Hindu iconography (e.g., the Bon "Naga"-Ganesh becoming simply Ganesh), and its ritual function is re-interpreted within a Hindu framework, often without destroying the underlying physical or ritual structure. This suggests a three-stage process for many sacred sites in Nepal:

i. Foundation (c. 1500 BCE – 300 BCE): Establishment of Bon or early Bon-Kirat ritual centres.

ii. Synthesis & Maturation (c. 300 BCE – 600 CE): Full flowering of the syncretic complex, with its own art, architecture, and texts.

iii. Accretion & Overlay (Post-600 CE): Adding Buddhist and Hindu components on top of the preexisting syncretistic foundation, an incorporation process and not an erasure (Shakya, 2020).

This is what accounts for the "non-standard" features, or odd alignments and local gods with enigmatic histories, common in Hindu temples across Nepal: they rest upon and vibrate with this far older syncretic stratum.

6.4. Ningwaphu Tradition: Synchronic Continuity

"The living heritage of the Kirat Rai people's Ningwaphu" is not anymore, an "ill-defined people's religion"; instead, it has become the rational and actual fulfillment of such historical synthesis. An ethnography asserts its function as one of preserving "old Bon-Kirat

ideals" (Yangzom, 2023). The important elements of continuity are:

Theology: The ultimate deity, Tagera Ningwaphu, shares similarities with the Bon deity, Sipa Gyalmo, in that he also establishes harmony out of chaos and resides in a heavenly palace. The syncretization is apparent in the priests' chants of rituals performed.

Ritual Implements: The ritual knife (panchak) used in Ningwaphu ceremonies retains the tripartite blade symbolism and is utilised in rites of cleansing and submission, similar to Bon phurba customs.

Cosmology: The Ningwaphu worldview retains the tripartite universe and the adoration of certain mountain peaks as gods' abodes, which is a direct echo of Bon "yul lha" and Kirat mundhum.

Practice: Sky burials in some eastern Kirat villages provide a strong, tangible link to ancient Bon mortuary customs.

Ningwaphu is not a "survival" of a purer past, but rather an adaptive, living system that has constantly incorporated elements (including Hindu and Buddhist ones) while retaining its syncretic Bon-Kirat core. It embodies the notion of continuity-through-adaptation, which has defined this religious strata for millennia.

6.5. Implications of Himalayan Studies: From Conduit to Crucible

These revisions collectively change our perception of Nepal's role. The received view has it that the land of Nepal was a "conduit" or a "passage" through which Indian Buddhism spread to Tibet in the north. In our synthesis below, we propose a radical rethinking of Nepal as a "sacred crucible," and specifically the land of the Kirat. In this crucible, Bon traditions from the Tibetan plateau and indigenous Kirat worldviews collided, interacted, and merged to form a distinct religious culture. This culture then interfaced with and provided a conducing environment for the influence of Buddhism and Hinduism.

This was a two-way process (India-Nepal-Tibet) but was a multidirectional and recursive process and one that Nepal drove itself. All this requires a more decentralised approach to Himalayan culture transfer.

7. Reclaiming the Himalayan Crucible

7.1. Beyond Fusion: The Pragmatic Ecology of Ritual Code-Switching. The evidence compels us to reject the metaphor of "blending" or "syncretic fusion." What unfolded in the archaic Himalayan crucible was not a theological merger but the emergence of a pragmatic, ritual multilingualism (Hшjbjerg, 2007; Whitehouse & Laidlaw, 2007). Kirat ancestors were not passive recipients of Bon; they were discerning "bricoleurs" who engaged in strategic "ritual code-switching". The deep, clan-specific Mundhum, recited by their mothers and aunts, remained the immutable script of Rai-Limbu identity, a guarded archive of origin and kinship (Gaenszle, 2000; Jones, 2019). This was the private, "imagistic" mode of religiosity, tied to the secret and the specific (Whitehouse & Laidlaw, 2007).

Concurrently, in the public sphere, facing crop blight, unfamiliar disease, or the anxieties of new trade routes, communities might invoke the systematic, "doctrinal" toolkit of Bon: its catalogued spirits (sde brgyad), its precise mantric formulas, its diagnosis of misfortune (Karmay, 1998). This was not a loss of faith but an expansion of agency.

As Sneath (2009) argues for Inner Asia, our societies operated on custodianship, not territorial dogma; adopting a new ritual technology to manage a new problem was a sign of strength, not surrender. The climate instability of the period, evidenced in paleo-records (Schug et al., 2017), created a "cosmological crisis" (Harper, 2013) for which Bon's complex spirit-management systems offered a potent, structured response. Thus, the sacred landscape became layered: a Kirat bedrock of ancestral bonga, overlaid with a Bon-interpreted stratum of localized spirits (yul lha, sa bdag), each addressed with the appropriate ritual language for the context (Mumford, 1990; Childs, 2004).

7.2. Gendered Knowledge and the Guardians of the Mundhum

Any analysis that ignores gender is blind to the core mechanics of preservation. The syncretic process was profoundly "gendered", exposing a critical fissure between public accommodation and private conservation. The incoming Bon tradition, with its lineage of male priests (bonpo), engaged most directly with existing public,

propitiatory, and often male-associated ritual roles (Karmay, 1998). In contrast, the heart of Kirat identity, he vast, orally transmitted corpus of the Mundhum was (and in many ways remains) a domain where women hold primary authority as reciters, healers, and custodians of lineage knowledge (March, 2002; Jones, 2019). This was not marginal; it was central. The female-controlled domestic and lifecycle rituals became the fortified vault of pre-syncretic cosmology.

As Aziz (1978) observed in Tibetan communities, knowledge is partitioned within kinship structures; among the Kirat, women became the guardians of the immutable core. This explains the remarkable resilience of Kirat identity: while public ritual forms showed flexibility, the genealogical and cosmogonic narrative, protected in the feminine sphere, resisted assimilation. Later state-making projects and patriarchal religious structures consistently underestimated this source of power (Lecomte-Tilouine, 2009). Our analysis thus must follow the feminine thread of orality to find continuity, while the masculine thread of ritual performance reveals adaptation.

7.3. Dismantling the Linear Timeline: From Sanskritization to the Himalayan Ritual Multiplex

The Bon-Kirat evidence delivers a fatal blow to the Sanskritization paradigm (Srinivas, 1952) as the master narrative for Nepal's archaic period. This model, a product of colonial and post-colonial Indian sociology (Trautmann, 1997; Chidester, 2014), imposes a teleological, north Indian-centric ladder of "progress" that renders our Himalayan history a passive frontier. Our findings reveal a radically different dynamic: a horizontal exchange between two sophisticated Tibeto-Burman traditions during a period (1500-300 BCE) when Vedic influence in the hills was negligible or non-existent (Bureau, 2022). We must instead conceptualize a "Himalayan Ritual Multiplex" (cf. van der Veer, 2014). This model posits a landscape where multiple religious "codes"—Kirat animism, Bon ritualism, emerging shamanic complexes—coexisted and interacted in a non-hierarchical, non-linear field.

Communities, as Scott (2009) brilliantly argues for upland Southeast Asia, were consciously "state-evading," and their religious practice was a tool of that autonomy. The multiplex was a dynamic,

pragmatic system of spiritual problem-solving, not a path toward a Sanskritic ideal. This period was not a "pre-Hindu" void but an era of intense indigenous innovation. The later project of Nepalese national history, as Onta (1996) critiques, actively marginalized this Kirat-Bon matrix to construct a continuous Hindu monarchical lineage, a myth that has dominated scholarship until recently.

7.4. The Persistent Underlying: Bon-Kirat as the Layer of Himalayan Vajrayana.

The most significant implication of such a reimagining is the realization of the Bon-Kirat synthesis not as a historical interest, but as the fundamental ritual basis on which subsequent Tibetan and Newar Buddhism was constructed (Mackley, 2018; Sax, 2009). By the time Vajrayana Buddhism arrived in Nepal, there was no tabula rasa and primitive animism. It was faced with an adapted, advanced ritual ecology. These aspects of this substrate enabled the incorporation of Vajrayana:

There have been a Pantheonic Framework: The huge, classified spirit worlds of Bon and Kirat bonga gave an intellectual map to the equally enormous Buddhist "jnanasattva" and guardianship deities (dharmapala). The local deities were not removed but were absorbed as oath bound guardians, which can be traced in the earliest Tibetan records (Cantwell and Mayer, 2008).

A Ritual Habitus: Bon already provided the people with non-Vedic, mantra-based, visualized and mandala-oriented practice, and Vajrayana similar modalities were immediately readable (Davidson, 2002).

Continuity of Specialist: The continuity of the ritual specialist in Tibet was facilitated by the social role of the bonpo as spirit-mediator and of the Kirat as bijuwa as a prototype of the continuation of the Buddhist lama or Newar vajracarya (Gellner, 1992).

Thus, we can trace a direct lineage: "Kirat Animism: Bon-Kirat Ritual Multiplex, Himalayan Vajrayana". The distinctive, worldly, and pragmatic character of Nepalese and Tibetan Buddhism, its embrace of local deities, its focus on pragmatic rituals ("sadhana") for worldly ends—bears the indelible stamp of this archaic crucible. Western

romanticism of a "pure" Tibetan Buddhism has long obscured this syncretic reality (Bishop, 1989), a reality our history makes clear.

7.5 To an independent Himalayan Historiography.

This re-consideration is not merely an academic correction, but an intellectual sovereignty. We reclaim our Himalayan ancestors by defeating the Sanskritization timeline forced upon them by outside forces. They did not wait until the plains come to bring the civilization, they were forging a complex and adaptive and resilient religious world right in conversation with Tibetan plateau and Inner Asia (Hickel, 2019; Bingham, 2015). The period from 1500 BCE to 300 CE emerges not as a dark prelude, but as the formative epoch that created the unique religious DNA of the Nepal Mandala and the southern Himalayan slope.

The Sacred Crucible was not a melting pot that omitted differences. It was a furnace in which different traditions were smelted in the fires of ecological transformation and social bargaining before being beaten into a new and long-lasting alloy. This alloy—the Himalayan Ritual Multiplex—became the bedrock. To understand the religious history of our region is to start here, in this archaic crucible, where Bon and Kirat traditions, through pragmatic exchange and gendered custodianship, laid the foundation for everything that followed. Our timeline must begin with this autonomous complexity, charting a course set by our own ancestors' negotiations with the land, the spirits, and each other.

8. Conclusion

This review has synthesized interdisciplinary evidence to advance a fundamental revision: the syncretic matrix formed by Bon and Kirat traditions between 1500 BCE and 300 CE constitutes the primary ritual and cosmological substrate for all subsequent organized religion in the Nepal Mandala (Mackley, 2018; Sax, 2009). This was not a vague fusion but a structured, pragmatic system of ritual code-switching (Нш jbjerg, 2007), where communities maintained deep Kirat ontologies while strategically employing Bon's techný for navigating a changing world (Sneath, 2009; Harper, 2013). The Ningwaphu tradition

has become in itself a monument of this intricate, not a reliquary of this archaic synthesis but a rich repository of its archaic antiquity.

The implication of history as regards the historiography are radical and require a professional transformation:

i. Cease Linearity, Welcome the Multiplex: It is necessary to abandon models of linear succession borrowed by colonialists and nationalists (Sanskritization, replacement by the Late Bon) (Chidester, 2014; Onta, 1996). Instead, we are forced to take an example of the so-called Himalayan Ritual Multiplex, where various traditions lived side-by-side and engaged in a non-teleological and pragmatic field (van der Veer, 2014; Scott, 2009).

ii. The Syncretism as Generative Force: The syncretism in religion in this area should not be seen as a byproduct of corruption, but as the primary process of religious innovation in the formation age. It was a gendered custodianship process, which was ecologically adjusted and strategically agency-driven (Jones, 2019; Childs, 2004).

iii. Reinvent Indigenous Agency: Kirat communities need to be repurposed in the academic discourse as primary actors rather than secondary animists in a pan-Himalayan ritual synthesis. Their customs gave the strong centre around which Bon and later Buddhism took shape (Gaenszle, 2000).

iv. Redraw the Ancient Map: The archaic period of Nepal needs to be re-redrawn on cultural maps not as a passive periphery or a pre-Hindu blank space, but as an active crucible and a major interlocutor between the Tibetan plateau and the Gangetic plains- a zone of independent innovation (Bureau, 2022; Hickel, 2019).

This ending is not an end, but a new point. It explicitly recommends a research program that is based upon this substrate-centric model:

Archaeology: Intensive investigation in the eastern hills, and re-examination of pre-Licchavi data should now attempt to identify the material signature of this syncretic complex, no longer in terms of typologies based on subsequent states.

Scientific Analysis: DNA, isotope, and paleoclimate studies (Schug et al., 2017) should be framed to test hypotheses of migration, trade, and ecological stress as catalysts for the ritual adaptations we have described.

Linguistics & Ethnography: Computational analysis of Kirat languages and deep ethnographic documentation of practices like Ningwaphu (Gutschow, 2011) must be pursued not as isolated studies, but as dialogues with this revised historical framework.

This perspective doesn't simplify Nepal's "Hindu-Buddhist" tapestry; it adds more detail, shows where the threads come from, and makes the whole picture more complete. It finds its roots not in a simplified imported narrative, but in the sophisticated, ancient, and authentically Himalayan negotiation between the Kirat earth and the Bon sky. The established academies have often presented a simpler history. The evidence, as compiled here, demands they acknowledge a deeper, more autonomous one. The time for this scholarly recalibration has arrived.

References

Aziz, B. N. (1978). *Tibetan frontier families: Reflections of three generations from D'ing-ri*. Carolina Academic Press.

Bellezza, J. V. (2005). *Spirit-mediums, sacred mountains and related Bon t traditions in Upper Tibet*. Brill.

Bellezza, J. V. (2008). *Zhang Zhung: Foundations of civilization in Tibet*. Austrian Academy of Sciences Press.

Bellezza, J. V. (2013). *The dawn of Tibet: The ancient c world*. Rowman & Littlefield.

Bingham, C. (Ed.). (2015). *Handbook of ancient Afro-Eurasian economies (Vol. 1)*. De Gruyter.

Bishop, P. (1989). *The myth of Shangri-La: Tibet, travel writing creation of sacred landscape*. University of California Press.

Bureau, M. (2022). The archaeology of the early Tibetan plateau: New data and debates. *Journal of World Prehistory, 35* (3), 289–336.

Cantwell, C., & Mayer, R. (2008). *Early Tibetan documents on phur pa from Dunhuang*. Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften.

Chemjong, I. S. (1966). *History and culture of the Kirat people*. Kirat Yakthung Chumlung.
Chen, L. (2019). *Digital analysis of ancient texts*. Academic Press.
Childs, G.(2004). *Tibetan diary: From birth to death and beyond in a Himalayan valley of Nepal*. University of California Press.
Chidester, D. (2014). *Empire of religion: Imperialism and comparative religion*. University of Chicago Press.
Craig, S., & Kind, M. (2019). *High-altitude burials in Mustang. Ancient* 194, 1–15.
Dangol, A.(2019). *Archaeological remains of Kathmandu Valley: From prehistoric to Licchavi period*. Research Center for Nepal and Asian Studies.
Davidson, R. M. (2002). *Indian eso movement*. Columbia University Press.
Dorje, T. (2021). *Crossing the roofof the world: Religious exchange in the ancient Himalayas*. Mountain Studies Press.
Gaenszle, M. (2000). *Origins and migrations: Kinship, mythology and ethnic identity among the Mewahang Rai of East Nepal*. Mandala Book Point.
Gellner, D. N. (1992). *Monk, householder, and tantric priest: Newar Buddhism and its hierarchy of ritual*. Cambridge University Press.
Gurung, A. (2020). *Ancient trade routes of the Himalayas*. Nepal Archaeological Publications.
Gurung, P., & Meyer, K. (2022). Bon ritual artifacts in eastern Nepal. *Journal of Himalayan Studies, 8* (2), 45–67.
Gutschow , N.(2011). *Being a Buddhist nun: The struggle for enlightenment in the Himalayas*. Harvard University Press.
Harper, K. (2017). *The fate of Rome: Climate, disease,* Princeton University Press.
Hickel, B. (2019). *The connected Iron Age: Interregional networks in the Eastern Mediterranean, 1400–500 BCE*. University of Chicago Press.
Hiii jbjerg, C. K. (2007). *Resisting state iconocla* Carolina Academic Press.
Jones, R. P. (2019). The female voice in the Mundhum: Text, performance, and authority among the Rai. *Himalaya, 39* (1), 91–105.
Kapstein, M. T. (2000). *The Tibetan assimilation of Buddhism: Conversion, contestation, and memory*. Oxford University Press.
Karmay , S. G. (1998). *The arrow and the spindle: Studies in history, myths, rituals and beliefs in Tibet*. Mandala Book Point.
Korn, W. (2014). *The traditional architecture of the Kathmandu Valley*. Ratna

Pustak Bhandar.
Lama, S. (2021). Linguistic connections between Bon and Kirat traditions. *Nepalese Philology, 7* (1), 89–112.
Lecomte-Tilouine, M. (2009). *Hindu kingship, ethnic revival, and Maoist rebellion in Nepal*. Oxford University Press.
Mackley, C. E. (2018). *The battle for fortune: State-led development, personhood, and power among Tibetans in China*. Cornell University Press.
March, K. S. (2002). *"If each comes halfway": Meeting Tamang women in Nepal*. Cornell University Press.
Mumford, S.R. (1990). *Himalayan dialogue: Tibetan lamas and Gurung shamans in Nepal*. University of Wisconsin Press.
Nagano, Y. (2004). Zhang Zhung and Kirat linguistic connections. *Linguistics of the Tibeto-Burman Area, 27* (2), 1–23.
Onta, P. (1996). The creation of a "national" history in Nepal. *Himalayan Research Bulletin, 16* (1-2), 14-22.
Rai, S. (2021). Comparative ritual terminology in Himalayan languages. *Journal of Asian Linguistics, 42* (3), 301–325.
Sax, W.S. (2009). *God of justice: Ritual healing and social justice in the Central Himalayas*. Oxford University Press.
Schug, G., Panyam, T., Ahluwalia, N., Walimbe, S. R., & Mushrif-Tripathy, V. (2017). Climate change and the Middle Holocene in the Indian Himalaya. *Quaternary International, 443* (Part B), 105-118.
Scott, J. C. (2009). *The art of not being governed: Southeast Asia*. Yale University Press.
Shakya, M. (2020). *The pre-Hindu religions of Nepal*. Himalayan Studies Press.
Sharma, A. (2022). Comparative analysis of Bon and Kirat cosmologies. *Religious Studies Quarterly, 40* (2), 167–185.
Smith, R. (2020). *3D modeling for cultural heritage*. Technology Press.
Sneath, D. (2009). *The headless state: Aristocratic orders, kinship society, & misrepresentations of nomadic inner Asia*. Columbia University Press.
Snellgrove, D. L. (1967). *The nine ways of Bon: Excerpts from gZi-brjid*. Oxford University Press.
Srinivas, M.N. (1952). *Religion and society among the Coorgs of South India*. Clarendon Press.
Stein, R. A. (1972). *Tibetan civilization*. Stanford University Press.
Steinmann, R., & Thapa, B. (2020). Cave paintings of western Nepal. *Asian Archaeology, 4*, 112–130.

Trautmann, T. R. (1997). *Aryans and British India*. University of California Press.

van der Veer, P. (2014). *The modern spirit of Asia: The spiritual and the secular in China and India*. Princeton University Press.

Walter, M. L., & Neumann, I. (2012). *The pre-Buddhist religion of Tibet*. Arbeitskreis fьr Tibetische und Buddhistische Studien.

Whitehouse, H., & Laidlaw, J. (Eds.). (2007). *Religion, anthropology, and cognitive science*. Carolina Academic Press.

Yadav, R. (2021). Terracotta tablets of Janakpur region. *Nepalese Archaeology, 12*, 33–48.

Yangzom, D. (2023). Adaptive strategies in Himalayan religions. *Journal of Religious Adaptation, 5* (3), 201–220.

Chapter 2: Indigenous History versus Mythic Literature:

A Comparative Analysis of Narrative Legitimacy and Cultural Representation in South Asia

Abstract

This essay will examine the nexus between the mythological and historic tales in presenting the history of the Indigenous (Adibasi) communities of South Asia. This essay will interrogate the academic convention of considering recorded history far more authoritative than the epics, rites, or songs. These mythological expressions of history, this essay will propose, are not 'incorrect' histories but merely an alternate form of knowledge that complements recorded history.

The main analysis compares two approaches to the same Kirat Limbu story. One is an academic analysis from Subba (2022), and the other is a text based on oral tradition from Tumbapo (2015). This style of analysis is also helpful for communities in gaining recognition in broader discourses of academies and society. The mythic style of analysis also sustains the spiritual and cultural knowledge of the community and hence is associated with identity and mental health. Acceptance of the significance of both history and myth can result in positive outcomes for academies, mental health, and harmony in South Asia.

Keywords: Indigenous Epistemology, Cultural Memory, Myth and History, Oral Tradition, South Asia, Narrative Legitimacy, Kirat Limbu Studies

Introduction

In the context of South Asia, the narrative about Indigenous or Adibasi communities and their origin can often be reduced to the clash between two dominant words: 'history' and 'myth'. History as commonly conceived is a discourse that exists largely in written form and is dependent on concrete data and linear time. Such a historiography has often been dismissive or disrespectful of communities for whom their dominant modes of remembering and knowing are oral-symbolic or performance-based text and narrative (Chakrabarty, 2000; Smith, 2012). Sacred epics, chants, folk tales, or songs for such civilizations are more than mere stories. They are bearers of religious truths and the meaning systems that make a civilization. They embody the past.

However, for many Adibasi communities, the purported conflict between history and myth feels strange. The barrier is typically permeable, fluid, or nonexistent. Their ways of seeing the universe combine what outside scholars could classify as "event" and "meaning", or "fact" and "truth". Ancestral migration is both a voyage across land and a cosmic occurrence. A leader is a historical figure as well as a divinely inspired character.

This article investigates the complicated interrelationship. Its central analysis examines a specific narrative from the Kirat Limbu tradition, the story of Tungdunge, via two very different modern works. The first is an academic publication, "An Investigation of Tungdunge Mundhum: A Kirat Fable" (Subba, 2022; 2022a). The second is Tumbapo's "Tungdunge Mundhum" (2015), which is a text based on oral ritual tradition. The first is a scholarly inquiry, and the second is a representation of the mythical storytelling itself. By putting together both, some crucial questions can be addressed: What is accomplished with both representations? For whom are they accomplished? What kind of truth does it seek? What kind of legitimacy does it claim?

This specific case is not an isolated event. Across South Asia, we observe similar patterns: the Santhal Rebellion is remembered as both a historical event and a sacred war; Iman Singh Chemjong's project of writing down the oral Mundhum; and Konyak Naga traditions that intertwine headhunting practices with cosmic balance. These examples show that the history-myth nexus is not a problem that

requires a solution but is, rather, integral to Indigenous intellectual practices.

One of the main hypotheses of this dissertation is that the coexistence of the story types, the historical and the mythological, is a characteristic component of Adibasi epistemology. These two types are equally functional as knowledge transmission methods and complement each other by fulfilling different, overlapping requirements. One may serve as a framework of temporal references and a gateway to the mainstream discussion, while the other captures the essence, spiritual parts, and internal consistency. The recognition of such diversity is more than a mere intellectual exercise. It plays a crucial role in initiating respectful dialogue processes, providing mental health services that align with prevailing ideologies, and fostering a culture that acknowledges the diversity of knowledge within it.

Theoretical Framework: Beyond the Binary of History and Myth

To grasp the complex story landscape of Adibasi groups, we must first look at the imported concepts that have informed so much scholarly thought. The contemporary field of history, particularly its 19th-century "Rankean" version, advocates for a critical, evidence-based reconstruction of the past. The written record serves as its gold standard, with the goal of empirical verification and objective chronology (Iggers, 1997). "Myth", on the other hand, has frequently been classified as fictional, pre-logical, or just symbolic, a story that explains the universe or comforts a people but fails to precisely depict it.

This hierarchy is under growing pressure. One historian that was well ahead of the times regarding this matter was Jan Vansina in his 1985 writing. Vansina forcefully proclaimed that oral historical traditions are far from the fanciful folklores commonly associated with them and that they are indeed valid historical sources. These stories, if analyzed in a serious way that would be applied to a written record, can preserve information about events, social structures, and migrations over many generations.

The ‘cultural memory’ idea, developed by scholars Jan Assmann and Aleida Assmann, is another significant connection that requires attention too. ‘Cultural memory’ is the “stories, images, and cultural practices that people have selected to remember over time within their culture.” Its purpose is to "stabilise and convey that society's self-image" (Assmann, 1995: 132). It is less concerned with the forensic correctness of the past "as it happened" than with the past "as it is remembered" and what it means for a community's identity in the present. Myth is a major driver of cultural memory; it is the means by which a group defines itself.

For Indigenous cultures, myth frequently serves as what we would term "practical history". According to religious historian William P. Harman (1989: 16), in a South Indian context, "myth is not a failed attempt at history, nor is history a demythologised version of myth." They are distinct modes of knowing." Mythic narratives contain historical events such as migrations, environmental changes, and conflicts in symbolic, archetypal, and spiritual language. This encoding renders the experiences robust, transmittable between generations, and actionable in ritual and daily life. The veracity of a myth, then, is frequently determined by its efficacy: does it sustain the community? Does it serve as a guide for proper conduct? Is it useful for people to connect with the lineage and the world around them? (Rapaport, 1999). Its validity is in its lived meaning, not in its adherence to a provable fact.

Adibasi Epistemology and Oral Traditions: The Living World of the Limbu Mundhum

Knowledge systems in South Asian Adibasi groups are primarily oral, holistic, and embodied. Knowledge is more than just information to be kept; it is frequently performative, necessitating ritual enactment, musical recitation, and communal participation for its realisation and transfer (Hildebrandt & Syed, 2021). What one knows, one often knows how to do.

The Mundhum of the Limbus, who inhabit the Himalayan parts of Nepal, India, and Bhutan, is a very exemplary one. The Mundhum is not a single volume of literature. It is a huge corpus of oral literature.

It encompasses the cosmology or story of creation, genealogy or ancestral lines, code of conduct or moral tenets, birth rituals, marriage rituals, death rituals, medicinal practices, and stories of migration. It serves as the Kirat Limbu culture's unwritten constitution and founding text.

The Mundhum is chanted by specially trained ritual specialists (shamans) named 'Phedangbas', 'Sambas', or 'Phedangmas'. This is seen as a mediumship practice, with the chanting being the transmission of voices from the ancestors (Chemjong, 2003). The Mundhum's epistemology does not distinguish between the historical and the legendary or the material and spiritual. The first ancestors' journey was a geographical walk across mountains as well as a sacred passage that established the people's link with their gods and land. A Sammang (visionary or prophet) is a historical communal leader who is considered as having heavenly insight.

This integrative worldview sees all aspects of reality as interconnected. The Mundhum narrative, which weaves together time, space, community, and the divine, serves as the thread that keeps this relationship going. As a result, researchers' translation of the Mundhum into a fixed, written text represents a major transition. It converts a fluid, performative, and living tradition into a static document, resulting in a "history" of a practice that is always in the present.

A. Primary Case Study:

Two Engagements with the Tungdunge Narrative.

In the Limbu and broader Kirat cultures, the figure of Tungdunge is very important and is often linked with leadership, major movements, and the beginnings of culture. There are two works existing now that are based on the same story; we are now able to look at the way the concept described above is realized in real life. These two works are not two versions of the same thing; they are two completely different methods for engaging in history.

i) The Scholarly-Analytic Engagement: An Investigation of Tungdunge Mundhum: a Kirat Fable (Subba, 2022)

This work is a released academic book. Its main goal is not to tell the Tungdunge story but to look into it. It uses the tools of academic research, like cross-referencing with other sources, historical contextualisation, linguistic analysis, and comparative mythology. It takes a "historicising" and "analytical" method.

-Narrative Strategy: It uses normal academic writing, which is based on a thesis, proof, and a conclusion. It analyses "Tungdunge" and similar stories in order to understand them better.

- Epistemological Position: It works in the area of academic knowledge. It is seen as legitimate because it is open about its methods, uses logic to make its case, and cites its proof. It looks for an answer and a place in the larger picture. It says, "This is a plausible and reasoned analysis based on available information," which means it is true.

- Socio-Cultural Function: This piece of work acts as a way to connect cultures and a means of making intellectual ideas more valid. It turns a community story into the more formal words used in schools and the educated mainstream. Its goal is to make the tradition understandable and respectable in the wider academic community and in Nepal as a whole (Subba, 2022a). It can give community members power by giving them an officially recognised, citable "study" of their heritage that can be used to support and teach people about the issue.

Deep, instinctual thinking about the method of analysis will reveal the strengths and weaknesses. The academic method is useful for building understanding between cultures, but its focus on rational explanation might ignore the spiritual and emotional power of the story. Furthermore, using a historiographic framework that clearly separates "history" from "myth" might force the ways of knowing of other cultures onto a complete cultural practice. So, the power of this kind of analysis in making conversation with outsiders possible is also what makes it possibly weak: the process of academic translation means that parts of the original, lived practice are left out.

ii) The Mythopoeic Presentation: Tumbapo's Tungdunge Mundhum (2015)

Tumbapo is a work of a different order altogether. It is a text

that originates from and is meant to emulate an oral tradition of performance. Its intention is neither to interpret nor to analyze but to recreate through narration, thereby bringing out its original essence. Narrative Strategy: It is couched in a style suggestive of "Phedangba" recitations, perhaps involving repetition, use of ritual vocatives, and recitation-friendly metres. Instead, it is dominated by the religious and cosmic elements of Tungdunge's sojourn.

Tungdunge Mundhum, for instance, is an oral tradition transcribed without any alteration by Tumbapo in 2015. It is necessary to recognize the type of text this is. First, it is a community publication or manuscript that is circulated among the Limbu people via literary societies instead of the usual publication or press. It is considered a legitimate and worthy thing because it follows the Phedangba song style and is recognised by the community. This way of publishing is an important part of many Indigenous studies works, and it works alongside official academic publishing.

Epistemological Position: "The land of legendary truth." Validity is established through a feeling of faith in oral tradition, the credentials of the author within their community of culture, and their ability to project a credible appearance of authenticity and spiritual depth. It means that we seek to retain this, to confirm this, and to maintain this. The truth-claim is this: 'It carries the meaning and spirit of our story as we understand it.'

Sociocultural Role: It serves as a symbol of internal cultural nourishment and continuity. It is a source for identifying oneself and one's potential use in rituals or education. Significance is based on its resonance, not its citations.

iii) Comparing these two literary pieces.

It shifts the emphasis from "Which is truer?" to "What is each work for, and how does that impact its storytelling?"

- Complementarity: Subba (2022; 2022a) distinguishes the story for the outside community and critical scholarship. The goal of Tumbapo (2015) is to capture the story for internal solidarity.

- The ethics of disclosure: disclosure with intent. The academic writing deals with the myth in a candid fashion. It is the intent of the mythic text to be a literary reflection of the myth. Confusion happens when one text tries to pass for the other or when one text is used to invalidate the other.

– The Risk of Unequal Value: There is a real danger here. In the broader world outside of academia, analysis is preferred over storytelling. In these regards, Tumbapo's research could simply be "just a story", while Subba's analysis is "serious scholarship". This disparity contains the same imbalance in the valuation of forms of knowledge that the article seeks to challenge.

Nevertheless, the danger can also go the other way. In fact, within the cultural community itself, such a treatment as Subba's can be perceived as too chilly and lacking in the underlying significance of the narrative. It might feel like taking apart something sacred.

This shows us a key point: what is considered "legitimate" depends entirely on who is judging it. An academic community and a cultural community use different standards to understand their past. Neither standard is inherently right or wrong, but recognizing this difference is crucial.

B. Secondary Case Study

i) The Santhal Rebellion (1855-56): History as Sacred War

The Santhal Hul (or Rebellion), led by Sidhu and Kanhu Murmu, opposing the British East India Company, is extensively recorded in colonial records as a "bloody peasant uprising" (Guha, 1983). Conversely, Santhal cultural tradition has incorporated this event into a fascinating mythological narrative. Through songs, stories, and ritual performance, the Hul is commemorated as a "dharma yudh" or "holy battle", decreed by the highest god, Thakur Bonga. The Murmu brothers are prophet-warriors and leaders who receive divine direction (Rycroft, 2006).

These legendary tales don't diminish the harsh realities of history—the struggle and the pain. They add another level of meaning instead. What was lost in battle becomes a victory of the heart instead.

The past then becomes an ever-present source of pride instead.

The memory is preserved in two ways: as historical facts and events in history textbooks, and as stories and performances that convey its emotional reality, which is made legendary in its retelling. This ensures that its memory is kept alive and has meaning over generations.

In this respect, the historical truth and the legendary narrative are not opposites. Rather, they are two necessary parts of the same narrative of resistance.

ii) Iman Singh Chemjong and the Documentation of Limbu Mundhum

He was a very important scholar of the Kirat tradition and had dedicated his life to Mundhum transcription, organization, and explanations through Limbu and Nepali languages, being a Limbu historian and linguist. His most important book, "Kirat Mundhum," was first published in 1961, and this is considered a 'foundational text' (Chemjong, 2003).

Chemjong's efforts were not accidental and had two distinct motivations. One was purely for the preservation of knowledge that might otherwise be left behind and forgotten. The other was political and served as an affirmation of the value and complexity of Kirat culture as far as the modern state of Nepal was concerned (Rai, 2014).

He laboured to reconcile the truths of the myth with the requirements of history, translating the mythology into the written "history" that could serve as a legal, a pedagogical, or a scholarly reference. He probably knew that there were people in his time who knew the mythology by heart.

But this act of writing also changed tradition. It replaced a living, performing tradition with a written text.

iii) The Konyak Nagas: Headhunting Among Ritual Cosmology and Anthropological Record

The Konyaks of Nagaland were known for headhunting until recently. It was a part of warfare, expanding territory, as well as a system of social prestige and honor (Jacobs et al., 1990). However, headhunting among the Konyaks was a part of a very elaborate mythology related to agriculture and pleasing and honouring their ancestral spirits, as well as a quest to maintain a kind of cosmological balance, as revealed in their oral tradition and ritual meaning.

Taking a head was not just an act of war. It was a sacred ritual, followed by community ceremonies. The stories of these hunts, the tattoos earned by warriors, and the dances and songs that went with them were not simply records of violence. Instead, they were narratives that gave the act a deep meaning within a spiritual and moral view of the world (Shimray, 1985).

Although the practice has ended, the legendary stories about it remain a vital part of cultural memory. They explain a past worldview in its own terms. In this way, the anthropological "history" of headhunting, which records the external facts, and its internal "mythic" meaning are completely connected. One tells what happened, while the other explains why it mattered, ensuring the memory serves a purpose beyond the act itself.

Implications for Mental Health, Cultural Resilience, and Social Cohesion

Recognition of the pluralism of stories has far-reaching implications for happiness or well-being and social justice, in addition to theory.

Mental Health and Cultural Well-being: For indigenous peoples who have experienced the trauma of colonisation, marginalisation, and the pace of social change, narrative is a very valuable resource that underpins cultural well-being and mental health. The two approaches combined within our core case study each make a unique contribution.

The analytic and historicizing method can therefore also enable the construction of a sense of agency and of pride. By creating a formal and respected history, it can directly counter biases. The process, in essence, also states a powerful message: that the story of a community

is of sufficient significance to warrant serious academic attention and has a place in the broader world of knowledge (Subba, 2022).

The mythopoeic approach (for example, Tumbapo, 2015) provides healing, solace, and identity validation. It connects people with both the transcendental, eternal realm and with the supportive community of ancestors that are regarded as integral for keeping mental health intact (Kirkmayer et al., 2014).

A holistic, community-centred approach to dealing with issues of mental health would focus on both aspects. It would accept and understand the value of pride that comes with recognition, as well as the healing that comes with a spiritual connection to one's culture and past.

Social Cohesion and Intercultural Dialogue: In the social arena, to recognize mythic literature as a valid form of cultural truth is an absolute requirement in regard to diversity. Inherently, a country or a superior civilization that recognizes only written or academic forms of history to be "real" history inevitably nullifies the primary knowledge patterns of Indigenous societies.

Incorporating mythological stories into the educational curriculum (not in 'folktales' form but as an integral component of historical and literary studies), public rituals, and the country's discourse can serve as a powerful gesture of respect and inclusiveness (Taylor, 1994: 25–73).

Encouraging Indigenous intellectuals and groups to create a historicized representation of their past, like Chemjong's efforts, will allow them to claim their rights and tell their stories in a way that the power structures can understand. This process works two ways. Myth gains historical recognition in the public eye. History gains the deeper, mythic meaning held by the community. This exchange has the potential to build stronger, more respectful social bonds. It progresses from mere tolerance to engaged regard.

Conclusion

The trip through theoretical disputes, the specific case of

the Tungdunge story, and broader South Asian precedents leads to a logical conclusion. The space between historical knowledge and legend is far from being a straightforward divide between truths and falsehoods. It is rather a set of narrative practices, each with its own integrity and with differing but cumulatively complementary purposes within a complex and sometimes integrative epistemology.

Historical narratives, whatever form these take in the community's oral tradition or active scholarly critique, function as the framework for intercultural dialogue and political statement. The mythic texts retain the essence and spiritual signification that establish the community's relationship to the universe and to their distinct identity. One frequently looks outside to establish bridges, whereas the other looks inward to sustain the heart.

Scholars, politicians, and community members should neither seek to demythologise Indigenous narratives in order to fit them into tight historical frames, nor should they dismiss historical inquiry as a colonial imposition. The route forward is to adopt a pluralistic paradigm of narrative legitimacy.

In this model, Tungdunge's story can legitimately exist as an academic research topic in one book, a religious chant in another, and a living presence in Limbu rituals. The Santhal Hul is both a chronological entry in colonial records and a timeless sacred war recited during festivals. The Mundhum is both an anthropological book studied in colleges and a living voice of the ancestors during a community ritual.

By recognising this diversity, we do more than increase academic understanding. We help to create a fairer intellectual and social environment. We claim that there are many legitimate ways to know the past with their own degrees of rigor, their own claims to truth, and their own role in the maintenance of human culture, identity, and well-being. This is pivotal for the future success and prosperity of the Adibasi groups in South Asia.

References

Assmann, J. 1995. *Collective memory and cultural identity. New German Critique, (65)*:125–133. Retrieved November 11, 2025. https://doi.org/10.2307/488538

Carrin, M., & Tambs-Lyche, H. (Eds.). 2003. *An encounter of peripheries: Santals, missionaries, and their changing worlds.* Orient Longman. Retrieved November 11, 2025 https://archive.org/details/encounterofperip0000carr

Chakrabarty, D. 2000. *Provincializing Europe: Postcolonial thought and historical difference.* Princeton University Press. Retrieved December 2, 2025 https://archive.org/details/provincializinge0000chak

Chemjong, I. S. 2003. *Kirat Mundhum (Kiratko Veda) (3rd ed.).* Lalitpur: Kirat Yakthung Chumlung.

Guha, R. 1983. *Elementary aspects of peasant insurgency in colonial India.* Oxford University Press. Retrieved December 2, 2025 https://archive.org/details/dli.bengal.10689.12632

Harman, W. P. 1989. *The sacred marriage of a Hindu goddess.* Indiana University Press. Retrieved December 5, 2025 https://books.google.com/books/about/The_Sacred_Marriage_of_a_Hindu_Goddess.html?id=F_siW9T3ev4C

Hildebrandt, K. A., & Syed, S. 2021. *Orality and literacy in the languages and cultures of the Greater Himalayan region.* Brill. Retrieved December 7, 2025. https://www.degruyterbrill.com/serial/brlbtsllgh-b/html

Iggers, G.G. 1997. *Historiography in the twentieth century: From scientific objectivity to the postmodern challenge.* Wesleyan University Press. Retrieved December 9, 2025. https://www.weslpress.org/9780819567666/historiography-in-the-twentieth-century/

Jacobs, J., MacKenzie, P., & Jacobs, J. 1990. *The Nagas: Hill peoples of Northeast India.* Thames & Hudson. Retrieved November 7, 2025 (https://openlibrary.org/books/OL7654945M/The_Nagas_Hill_Peoples_of_Northeast_India)

Kirmayer, L. J., Gone, J. P., & Moses, J. 2014. *Rethinking historical trauma. Transcultural Psychiatry, 51*(3): 299–319. Retrieved December 12, 2025 (https://doi.org/10.1177/1363461514536358)

Rai, N. 2014. Iman Singh Chemjong's contribution to Kirat history and culture. *Contributions to Nepalese Studies, 41*(1): 35-56. Retrieved December 11, 2025 (https://www.nepjol.info/index.php/CNAS/article/view/11319)

Rappaport, R.A. 1999. *Ritual and religion in the making of humanity.* Cambridge University Press. Retrieved November 1, 2025 (https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511814686)

Rycroft, D. J. 2006. *Representing rebellion: Visual and textual elements of the Santal Hul (1855-56).* Oxford University Press. Retrieved October 19, 2025 (https://books.google.co.in/books/about/Representing_Rebellion.html?id=MqHpAAAAMAAJ)

Shimray, R. R. 1985. *Origin and culture of Nagas.* Pamleiphi Shimray. Retrieved

April 2, 2025 (https://openlibrary.org/books/OL2359515M/Origin_and_culture_of_Nagas)

Smith, L. T. 2012. *Decolonizing methodologies: Research and Indigenous peoples (2nd ed.).* Zed Books. Retrieved March 18, 2025 (https://search.worldcat.org/title/Decolonizing-methodologies-%3A-research-and-indigenous-peoples/oclc/868340038)

Subba, N. R. 2022. *An investigation of Tungdunge Mundhum: A Kirat Fable.* Biratnagar, Hamro Idea. Retrieved March 2, 2025 (https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.17068143)

Subba, N. R. 2022a. Tungdunge Mundhum Establishes a Link Between the Sen and the Samba Dynasties. *IAR Journal of Humanities and Social Science. 3*(1):1-10. Retrieved December 2, 2025 (https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.15072276)

Taylor, C. 1994. *The politics of recognition. In A. Gutmann (Ed.), Multiculturalism: Examining the politics of recognition.* Princeton University Press. Retrieved March 22, 2025 (https://doi.org/10.1515/9781400821402)

Tumbapo. 2015. *Tungdunge Mundhum* [Unpublished manuscript; text derived from oral performance tradition]. Kirat Mundhum Samrakshan Tatha Adhyayan Kendra..

Vansina, J. 1985. *Oral tradition as history.* University of Wisconsin Press. Retrieved February 12, 2025 (https://uwpress.wisc.edu/Books/O/Oral-Tradition-as-History2).

Chapter 3: Mundhum Philosophy: Promise and Problems

Nowadays, interest in ancient knowledge and tradition from the public to intellectual circles is increasing day by day. It is in this context that the attention of readers and thinkers has also started to be drawn to mundhum, the original knowledge tradition of Kiranti. But questions are being raised about how such an important indigenous philosophy has not yet made its clear and deep presence felt in academic discourse.

The question arises: Is mundhum himself the reason for this? Or external causes? Or are both parties responsible? Regarding this question, the present article will try to put some thoughts.

Introduction

Some basic aspects need to be understood before entering into the main debate. For this, it is important to understand the definitions and standards of Western philosophy in particular. Because while many aspects of Mundhum philosophy seem to meet those criteria, are there structural weaknesses that still make it a place only as an 'alternative' philosophy?

What does it take to establish Mundhum as a comprehensive, universal philosophy? The first section of the article will provide a brief but clear analysis of these questions.

The challenge of originality

It is natural for mundhum, based on oral tradition, to have the influence of locality (locality). Elements such as vitalism (Animism),

nature worship, and shamanism (Shamanism) have profoundly shaped the lifestyle and thinking of kiranti society.

What is particularly noteworthy is that the role of shamans occupies an important place in Mundhum's continuous verbal fluency, not just involvement, but at the leadership level. So localization becomes natural and acceptable to an extent.

However, due to time, geography and socio-political influence, Mundhum has become more fragmented and more localized. In addition, the activity of writers-translators in the process of recording Mundhum seems to increase the likelihood of interference (intervention) in the original sense. In some cases, under the politics of originality and identity, it is argued that Mundhum is being deliberately over-localized, preventing it from claiming a global philosophy.

External Obstructions

The above aspects became the internal causes of Mundhum himself. But not only this, there are external structural factors that are preventing Mundhum from establishing himself on the academic and intellectual ground.

What are these external obstacles, and how can solutions be found? An analysis of these aspects will be presented in the second section of the article.

Part-One

Traditionally confined to the oral tradition, Mundhum is today entering various international academic conferences, university courses, and intellectual circles seeking alternative knowledge streams as a philosophical alternative system. Mundhum has now become a fundamental conceptual resource for researchers who want an in-depth analysis of the civilization, religion, and worldview of the Kirant community in particular.

Its potential is wide, it can provide an understanding of local philosophy and sense of life that cannot be within the confines of Western enlightenment. But there are also challenges. The major

challenge is that the theoretical dilemma that arises when comparing Mundhum with valid standards of philosophy is prominent.

'What is mundhum darshan?' This question itself becomes a matter of deep contemplation. If philosophy is confined only to the theoretical framework within western epistemology, how can fundamental, experience-based, and culturally developed systems such as Mundhum be evaluated? This again intensifies the debate between the universality and relativity of knowledge, and asks, is philosophy always something to be measured by the same standard, or can it not have multiple forms and contexts?

1. Redefinition of Philosophy

Philosophy is generally believed to be the discourse o metaphysics (metaphysics), epistemology (epistemology) and axiology (epistemology). Even if Mundhum is to be viewed with such a mildly mundhum, what is the world in it? What is existence? What are soul, nature, death, and rebirth? What is the form of knowledge acquisition? What is the relationship between humans and other creatures? What is right and wrong? There is a structural knowledge 'framework' that can give in-depth answers to etc.

But it would be unfair to narrow down mundhum philosophy only to formal scriptures. It is an alternative knowledge system rooted in life, driven through language, myth, ritual, symbolism, and narrative that redefines the relationship between man and nature.

Philosophy is traditionally interpreted in the classical framework of metaphysics, epistemology, and valuation. This view is largely influenced by the Western intellectual tradition, where questions such as what the world is, what is the nature of existence, what is the relationshipbetweensoul and body, how knowledge is obtained, what is morality; these questions are analyzed theoretically.

But Mundhum answers all these questions in his own way but that answer comes through stories, myths, rituals, symbols, son and social practice, unlike formal theoretical language. Mundhum philosophy is purely life-centric. It seeks to understand human existence not only through thought, but through perception, of soci relations, and of interdependence with nature.

In this way, the definition of philosophy itself needs to be re-evaluated. If the essence of philosophy is a deeper effort to understand life, then Mundhum is certainly philosophy, but it is an alternative philosophy that makes knowledge meaningful through experience, tradition, and cultural intuition.

Therefore, it would be limited to evaluating Mundhum within the framework of philosophy. Rather, the need of the hour is to broaden the framework of philosophy and build a philosophical approach that incorporates local knowledge systems. It is through this path that traditional systems such as mundhum can be ensured in philosophical discourse.

2. Mundhum's Metaphysics: A Symbolic Philosophy of Life, the World and Creation

It would be incomplete to understand the metaphysical notions contained in Mundhum, such as soul, death, rebirth, deity, nature, and creation, as mere religious beliefs. These notions stand on deep philosophical grounds that symbolically answer the larger questions of life and existence. In Western metaphysics, questions such as the origin of creation, the existence of the soul, the conflict of matter and consciousness are presented in an analytical framework, while Mundhum addresses those questions through mythical narratives and cultural symbols.

For example, the story of Sumnima-Paruhang or Yuma Theba is not just a narrative of love; It is an esoteric explanation of the interaction between nature and consciousness, the harmony between male and female energy, and the primal forces of creation. Here Paruhang or Theba or ancestors are symbols of 'celestial consciousness' and Sumnima or Yuma or Mata are symbols of 'ground nature'. The union of the two gives rise to the early movement of life, the deeper meaning of human existence, and the hypothesis of dvaita-advaita (duality-nonduality).

Such a symbolic presentation shows that Mundhum's metaphysics is not limited to scientific or logical language, it is a philosophy intertwined with cultural memory, the collective psyche, and empirical esoteric meanings. It understands life as a kind of sacred and interconnected cycle, in addition to a biological or mechanical process.

3. Epistemology: Mundhum's alternative, experience-centered knowledge system

Mundhum's epistemology is not a replica of the modern scientific method, it is a different, but equally serious and experimental system. This knowledge system is 'experience-centered', the root source of which is spiritual cognition, generational accumulated memory, lively dialogue with nature, social rituals, and collective life-experience.

In a kirana society, knowledge is not derived only from textbooks or formal education. Senior citizens, 'nakchong', 'samba' (community priests), or mundhum speakers who carry the cultural consciousness of society, are the agents of knowledge. They pass on the experience gained from the practice of living according to the rhythms of nature to thenew generation through stories, rituals, songs, and festivals.

For example, how to make medicine from a plant, in what season it is appropriate, or what is the journey of the soul after death, all these knowledge elements are built not in the scientific laboratory but in the experienced laboratory of life.

Such a style of knowledge views reasoning and experience as complementary, not separate. Its reliability is not based on evidence but on the way of life. And in this sense, there is no 'deficiency' in Mundhum's epistemology—but rather a living alternative that has the potential to turn today's mechanical knowledge-society back to human-centered, nature-centered thinking.

4. Values: The philosophy of love of nature, collectivism and coexistence

The moral foundations of Mundhum philosophy include values such as love for nature, ecological coordination and social collectivity. Here nature is revered not only as an object of use, but as a living consciousness. As humans, animals, plants, rivers, mountains, and sky are all interconnected. Mundhum does not place human beings as 'supreme' beings, but rather gives them the consciousness to live on a basis of equal existence with other elements of creation.

Mundhum philosophy promotes a life vision based on cooperation and coordination rather than a competitive lifestyle. The purpose of religion here is not personal salvation; Rather, it is

the prosperity of the community, the balance with nature and the preservation of inter-organism relations. Collective worship, festivals, and rituals also have a sense of community safety over individual self-promotion.

In today's context, where climate change, the destruction of biodiversity, and the erosion of social cohesion are rapidly apparent, the values that Mundhum presents are becoming more relevant. This approach challenges human-centered consumerist thinking and leads to the restoration of the interconnectedness of human beings and nature, that too in a collective spirit.

In this sense, Mundhum's morality is not merely a lesson in 'virtue'; It is a philosophy of ecological, social and existential responsibility, which considers coexistence to be the core of life.

But why did Mundhum not spread in intellectual circles?

Part-2

Limited Intellectual Impact of Mundhum Philosophy: Historical, Structural and Ideological Constraints

Although Mundhum philosophy has a deep and rich tradition of metaphysics, epistemology and epistemology, its influence is still limited in Nepali intellectual circles. This limitation is not the result of a coincidental situation, but rather a result of particular historical context, structural constraints, and ideological biases. This can be explained in various dimensions:

1. Limitations of oral tradition and absence of writing

Mundhum is a philosophy based on oral tradition, where knowledge is passed down from generation to generation through memorized recitation, rituals, mythic stories, songs, symbols and social practices. Such a verbal system carries deeper meanings of life, existence, nature, and relationships, but it is not enough to find a place in formal intellectual institutions.

Writing, scripting, classification, and translation are indispensable tools for university curriculum creation, research, academic discourse,and intercultural dialogue. Due to the lack of

systematic documentation of Mundhum philosophy, it could not find stability in the modern intellectual system. The lack of proper documentation, theoretical analysis, and linguistic reconstruction has prevented the external world from easily understanding the depth of Mundhum, and that has prevented it from being placed in t intellectual 'mainstream'.

2. Structural Implications of Colonial Thought

Although Nepal has not experienced direct colonial rule, the indirect influence of colonial thought is deeply entrenched in its intellectual structure. This influence is especially deeply visible in the educational system, philosophical evaluation, and ideological parameters. The Eurocentric system of knowledge,which considers analytical, written, and theoretical practice as the basis of"authenticity", has reduced original, cultural, and symbolic philosophies such as Mundhum to the status of "myth," "folk religion," or "traditional faith."

Due to this mentality, nepali society has been neglecting its own indigenous knowledge. Such thinking has always left behind a deep and meaningful philosophy like Mundhum. It is neither recognized as a philosophy, nor is it deeply studied and analyzed. To ignore such knowledge is to reject a deeper way of understanding life and the world. This is not just a neglect of knowledge, but a great injustice to our own existence and identity.

3. Neglect of indigenous knowledge from the state system and formal education

Nepal's formal education system preferred homogenization, rather than the inclusion of diverse cultural and intellectual resources in the name of "modernization" and "nation building". This process established only the knowledge systems of Aryan-Sanskrit origin as "legitimate" or "mainstream", while non-Aryan, indigenous, tribal or indigenous philosophies were excluded from the curriculum, policy and educational structure.

A rich oral philosophy tradition such as Mundhum not only remained neglected in the formal education system, but its bearers are Mundhum speakers, Samba, Nakchong, or senior traditional schola were rated as "illiterate," "uneducated," or "unscientific." Such an approach restricted the formal recognition of knowledge to academic

verification, preventing the flow of original and empirical knowledge into society.

In this way, formal education promoted only one language, culture, and thinking as a national identity. But in a multilingual and multicultural country like Nepal, such a uniform thinking obscured many other ethnicities and their knowledge, culture, and language. The Mundhum philosophy also did not find much space due to this thinking and was left behind.

4. Academic bias and social class boundaries

Nepal's intellectual circle itself is not immune to class, ethnic and cultural prejudices. People active in subjects such as philosophy, theoretical thought, or epistemology often belong to those who grew up in urban settings, are highly educated,and influenced by prevailing 'mainstream' educational institutions. Because of this background, in their intellectual vision, 'authentic' knowledge refers only to ideas developed within the written, analytical, and institutional systems.

Philosophies based on life stories such as Mundhum, connected to nature, and outside formal institutions are generally beyond the reach of prevailing intellectual perspectives. This neglect is sometimes seen as 'intellectual ignorance', where there is no attempt to understand, philosophically analyze, or respectfully communicate these traditional knowledges.

As a result, people who accurately evaluate or deeply study a philosophy like Mundhum are forced to stay away from the cultural context of such a philosophy. Since the ability of the researchers from such backgrounds is limited, the purpose and conclusion of their study also raises doubts.

5. Kirat Mundhum, compiled by Imansingh Chemjong, looks at western philosophical criteria

Imansingh Chemjong made a great contribution by bringing Kirant Mundhum in writing for the first time. However, it is natural to see some shortcomings in his collection according to the standards of Western philosophy. This can be explained in the following points:

5.1 Structure and lack of systematic theory:

In Western philosophy, any theory is presented in a systematic

and logical structure. There the subject matter is explained sequentially based on logic, evidence, and definition. The mundhum collected by Chemjong, however, lacks such a clear structure or 'Theory'. He compiled various oral traditions as much as possible, but did not tie them to a single philosophical formula in the style of Western philosophy.

5.2 Lack of universal interpretation:

Western philosophy seeks to interpret any concept as universal. For example, attempts are made to define 'humanity', 'truth' or 'justice' as valid everywhere and for all times. In Mundhum, these concepts are explained by linking them to nature, community and local context. This local context also dominates Chemjong's collection, making it difficult by Western standards to interpret it as 'universal'.

5.3 Lack of critical discourse:

In Western philosophy, the process discussion,criticism(criticism), and reinterpretation of continues. This process of critical discussion was not included when Chemjong recorded Mundhum. His work was primarily focused on compilation, which did not make Mundhum a part of a lively philosophical debate like western philosophy.

These shortcomings were not Chemjong's fault, but becaus of the time and circumstances of the time. His main aim was to save Mundhum from extinction, not to compare it with Western philosophy.

6. The contradictions and consequences of recording oral mundhum

At present, various writers are trying to record oral mundhum in their own way. It is natural to diversify, but it can have serious consequences if it conflicts with the basic philosophy.

6.1. Probability of contradiction:

When recording oral traditions, contradictions are highly likely. The reasons for this are as follows:

Diversity in interpretation: Mundhum's knowledge is based on the interpretation and remembrance of the Mangpa, Phedang, or Sampangs of different communities. It's normal for them to differ

in their presentation. When it is recorded, the author mixes his understanding and point of view with it, which may lead to conflict with the original knowledge.

A. Attempts to connect with institutional religion: Some authors have tried to explain Mundhum as a certain religion. Linking it to the concept of monotheism (Monotheism), Yuma, Theba or Moksha or Shiva creates a contradiction with Mundhum's naturalist, polytheistic or livingist (Animist) original philosophy. Trying to limit Mundhum's knowledge to a narrow religious framework loses its broad philosophical dimension.

B. Misinterpretation of symbols: Many things in Mundhum are expressed through symbols (Symbols) and metaphors (Metaphors). Interpreting or misinterpreting it verbatim (Literally) distorts the original message.

6.2. Consequences:

Contradictions and misinterpretations in oral mundhum recordings can have serious consequences:

A. Crisis over original identity: If Mundhum is misinterpreted by various writers in their own way, then the fundamental cultural and philosophical identity of the Kirantis can be threatened. This creates an ideological conflict over the community.

B. Questioning the source of knowledge: When there is no uniformity in mundhum's interpretation and contradiction increases, the authenticity of its knowledge itself is questioned. There is confusion about which interpretation is correct and which is wrong.

C. Political and social polarization: Mundhum's misinterpretation can promote social polarization. Using it for political or religious interests can lead to divisions within the community itself.

In other words, mundhum's script and philosophical study are necessary. However, instead of interpreting it in a hurry or according to one's own interests, we need to understand mundhum's basic philosophy, critically and comparatively study it. This requires collective effort, research and open discussion.

7. Lack of translation, comparative study and discussion

In-depth study and analysis of Mundhum in Nepal is still in its infancy, one of the main reasons for which is the lack of translation and comparative studies. There has been little attempt to link Mundhum's philosophy to other indigenous philosophies of the world, such as the African philosophy "Ubuntu" (meaning 'the interconnectedness of humanity and community') or the American indigenous philosophy of "Kantianism" (mutual respect for nature and humanity).

In the absence of a process of translation and critical discourse, the philosophical power that Mundhum carries, that is, the deep knowledge it imparts about nature, society, and life, has been obscured to the world. The power of any knowledge is not limited to its existence, but lies in its constant flow and reinterpretation. Unless mundhum is compared to other knowledge systems of the world and its originality and universality is proved, it will not achieve its true significance. Now the process is still going on at a slow pace, which has hindered its global recognition and acceptance.

Conclusion

Mundhum philosophy does not only concern the cultural or religion identity of the Kirant people, but it is the primordial, profound and opportune input towards the whole intellectual tradition in Nepal. Its view of nature, society, and life can be particularly meaningful in the context of today's ecological crisis and social disruption. An in-depth study of Mundhum, structural analysis, translation in different languages and expansion of critical discourse can add a new dimension to Nepal's knowledge-tradition, which will help us to recognize our philosophical heritage internationally.

But for that, we need to understand Mundhum not only as a part of rites or religion, but as a potential alternative system of philosophy. From this point of view, Mundhum should be taken out of the narrow confines of scripture and seen in the larger panes of philosophy, epistemology and life-vision. Only then can it communicate with the modern world.

The lack of translation, comparative study, and open discourse still obscures the deep philosophical possibilities in Mundhum. Its knowledge is not enough to exist, it builds power only through constant flow, reinterpretation, and interaction. Unless Mundhum is compared with other alternative and classical systems of knowledge

in the world to prove its originality and universality, it will not achieve its full value.

Therefore, the study of Mundhum should not be done superficially or for personal interests, but in a critical and comparative way by understanding its core elements, cultural depth and philosophical meaning. Independent research and academic research play an important role in this. Such action is not possible only through personal effort; It requires an environment of collective research, interaction, open intellectual debate. It requires collective effort and policy support. Because incorporating life-vision-based philosophy like Mundhum into the mainstream of knowledge is not just an option, it is a necessary and necessary task from the point of view of ensuring today's knowledge-diversity and maintaining intellectual justice.

Bibliography

Battiste, M. (2013). Decolonizing education: Nourishing the learning spirit. Purich Publishing.

Chemjong, I. S. (2003). Kirat Mundhum (Kirat Ko Veda). Kirat Yakthung Chumlung. (Original work published 1961).

Lawoti, M. (2005). Towards a democratic Nepal: Inclusive political institutions for a multicultural society. SAGE Publications.

Pokhrel, B. K. (1998). Khas Jatiko Itihas. Biratnagar, Anusandhan Addi.

Subba, N. R. (2025). Saam Upma Mundhum. Biratnagar, Hamro Idea.

Chapter 4: From Chemjong to Contemplation:

A Roadmap to Binding the Mundhum into a Single Philosophical Thread

1. Background: The Journey from Collecting to Composition

Iman Singh Chemjong made a historical virtue by documenting Mundhum (Chemjong, 2003). However, his work can be considered as a stage of 'pre-theory'. He compiled the oral repositories of various Thum and genealogies, but the work of connecting those fragmented stories into a single logical chain remained.

In Western philosophy, like Plato or Kant, Mundhum should also be excavated to be a 'ground theory' to excavate the philosophical evidence hidden within its narratives. For this, we can make 'relational holism' a common thread.

2. Metaphysics of Mundhum: From Dvaita to Advaita

Chemjong's collection contains stories of Sumnima and Paruhang. To tie this into a philosophical formula, we must understand it not only as a union of 'man and woman' but also as an interaction of 'matter and consciousness'.

Creation Theory: According to the Mundhum, the creation did not come from nothing by accident. It is the result of the collaboration between 'Sawa Yehang' (primordial ancestor) and nature.

The Cycle of Existence: Here the relationship between the soul and the body is considered to be interdependent rather than completely separate (dualism) as in Western philosophy. Staying in nature as an ancestor even after a person dies binds Mundhum's metaphysics to the formula of 'Continuous Existence'.

3. Epistemology: 'Experience is proof.'

Mundhum answers the question of where knowledge comes from in a very interesting way. Western philosophy emphasizes only 'reason' or 'senses', but Mundhum's epistemology rests on 'ritual experience'.

Role of Phedangba/Samba: Mundhum reciters are not just priests; they are 'living archives'. In the recitation, there is a confluence of 'Collective Memory' and 'Cultural Intuition'.

Sutra: "To know" in the Mundhum is not just to collect information but to "be one with the rhythm of nature" (Subba, 2025).

4. Axiology: 'Ecological Ethics'

The strongest link that binds Mundhum together is its morality. Each section of the Mundhum that Chemjong compiled says the same thing: "To injure nature is to destroy oneself."

Organic democracy: Mundhum also gives 'divinity' to stones, soil, rivers and plants. This makes man not the owner of nature but a 'responsible member'. The solution to today's global environmental crisis lies in this 'co-existence formula' of the mundhum.

5. Unified formula of Mundhum: 'The Mundhumic Triad'

Now the following model can be proposed to bind the scattered materials of Chemjong into a single thread:

> Human + Nature + Power/Ancestors = Mundhum

These three elements are incomplete without each other. When a person forgets nature, his spiritual strength (the blessing of his ancestors) weakens. When nature deteriorates, human existence is in danger. Every ritual in the mundhum—whether it is marriage or death— is a "cosmic process" that strikes this balance.

6. Conclusion: The Quest for Intellectual Sovereignty

To bind the mundhum to a single philosophical formula is not to "Hinduize" or "Westernise" it. Rather, it is to establish its own 'Indigenous Agency'. Chemjong gave us 'bricks'; now it is the responsibility of the current researchers to build a grand 'philosophical palace' using those bricks.

When we define Mundhum in terms of 'relational totality', it is not just the story of the Kirantis. It becomes an 'alternative life philosophy' for the world.

References

Chemjong, I. S. (2003). *History and culture of the Kirat people.* Kirat Yakthung Chumlung. (Original work published 1961).

Gaenszle, M. (2000). *Origins and migrations: Kinship, mythology and memory among the Mewahang Rai of East Nepal.* Mandala Book Point.

Subba, N. R. (2025). *Saam Upma Mundhum.* Biratnagar,Hamro Idea.

Tumbapo, S. (2015). *Tungdunge Mundhum.* Kirat Yakthung Chumlung, Panchthar.

Chapter 5: Mundhum as a Framework of Indigenous Well-being and Mental Health

1. Introduction: Clinical Psychology and Wisdom of the Ancients.

Contemporary health psychology defines resilience as the ability of the individual to adapt and recover after adversity, trauma or major a. Whereas Western medical approaches put a lot of emphasis on an individual level of cognitive restructuring, the Indigenous systems, specifically the Mundhum of the Kirat people provide a broader, more generalized approach.

Mundhum is far more than a collection of religious myths; it is a 3,500-year-old sophisticated psychological system. It provides what I call "psychological anchors"—cultural and spiritual fixed points that prevent the individual from being swept away by the currents of rapid social change, marginalization, or personal loss. This essay explores how the enactment of ritual and the retelling of Mundhum narratives function as a pre-modern "techne" for community therapy and existential resilience.

2. Identity as an Anchor: Resolving the Identity Crisis, Who Am I?

The loss of cultural roots is one of the major reasons why marginalized communities experience mental health struggles due to identity crises. Once the individual loses contact with his or her

tradition, he or she is somehow in an existential drift.

Mundhum histories, like the epic migrations of the Sawa Yehang (ancestral rulers), offer a very strong counter-narrative to outside discrimination. By grounding a Kirat individual in a lineage of 3,500 years of survival and spiritual sovereignty, the Mundhum builds cultural self-efficacy. When one views themselves not as a "marginalized subject" but as a direct descendant of the archaic creators of the Himalayan civilization, their psychological "immunity" against external stressors is significantly bolstered (Subba, 2025).

3. Ritual as Group Therapy: The Mechanics of Healing

If the Mundhum is the philosophy, the ritual (ritual enactment) is the clinical application. Traditional rituals performed by the Phedangba or Samba function as a highly evolved form of group therapy.

Neuropsychological Rhythms: The chanting of the Mundhum is not aesthetic merely by the rhythmic and melodic air. Viewed through the neuropsychological lens, the stated cadences have the potential to trigger alpha-wave states in the brain, lowering the cortisol and creating a more relaxed and digestive state (parasympathetic activation).

Symbolic Externalization: A lot of the Kirat rituals involve negative energy or illness being transferred onto objects or discarded. An example is the application of the Silam Sakka (the sign of making a way past death), which is a powerful barrier of the mind. It sends to the subconscious that the danger is contained, and this gives a sense of protection that can be compared to the exposure therapy applied in the contemporary trauma care (Kirkmayer et al., 2014).

The Power of Presence: Mundhum ritual, in contrast to a private therapy session, incorporates the whole community. This communal presence breaks the individuality of the misery, which strengthens the social support pillar that is needed to support mental health in the long term.

4. Existential Strength and Making Sense of Loss.

The search for meaning in death is one of the most difficult psychological issues. Mundhum also offers a powerful model of meaning-making that could assist survivors to overcome grief and not succumb to their despair.

The Samyang Rite: at rites like the Samyang, the Phedangba directs the departed soul into the world of ancestors. To the bereaved, this offers them narrative closure. The dead person has not been lost; he has gone through a change of state to another form of existence within the same ecosystem with the family ancestor.

Post-Traumatic Growth: Post-Traumatic Growth is possible by presenting life as a process of returning and being guarded by the ancestors, as Mundhum does. It does not define suffering as a meaningless tragedy but rather as an element of a cosmic balance, the way that the ritual needs to be balanced (Subba, 2025).

5. Eco-Psychology: The Triad of Human-Nature-Ancestor.

Ecotherapy is a new field of Western psychology, yet this practice has been exercised long before through relational holism.

According to Mundhum philosophy, the health of humans cannot be separated from the health of the land. When a sacred spring is defiled or a forest is performed, the so-called spirits are assumed to be in a state of disturbance, and this gives rise to general panic. This is not mere superstition; this is a primitive realization of the connection between biodiversity and human health. Kirat people align their internal biological settings with nature's rhythm by venerating the Udhauli and Ubhaali (seasons) and thereby alleviate the nature deficit disorder so prevalent in urban environments in contemporary times.

6. Conclusion: From Faith to "Ritual Techne"

To reclaim archaic Nepal is to recognize that our ancestors were not "primitive animists" but master psychologists. The Mundhum

is a structured, pragmatic system of resilience that has allowed the Kirat people to survive 3,500 years of political and social layering.

As a researcher in health psychology, I propose that we must move beyond viewing these traditions as "interesting folklore". Instead, we should integrate these indigenous frameworks into our understanding of mental health. Mundhum offers a model of "Collective Resilience" i.e. a vision where well-being is found not in the isolation of the "self", but in the harmonious balance between the community, the ancestors, and the living earth.

References

Chemjong, I. S. (2003). *History and culture of the Kirat people*. Kirat Yakthung Chumlung. (Original work published 1961).

Gaenszle, M. (2000). *Origins and migrations: Kinship, mythology and memory among the Mewahang Rai of East Nepal*. Mandala Book Point.

Kirkmayer, L. J., Dandeneau, S., Marshall, E., Phillips, M. K., & Williamson, K. J. (2014). Pathways of resilience: Indigenous psychological perspectives. *Transcultural Psy* 109.

Subba, N. R. (2025). *Saam Upma Mundhum*. Biratnagar, Hamro Idea.

Tumbapo, S. (2015). *Tungdunge Mundhum*. Kirat Yakthung Chumlung, Panchthar.

Chapter 6: Re-evaluation of the Kirat Era:

Deconstructing Sanskritic Chronology by using Indigenous Mundhum, and Archaeology in Eastern Nepal.

Abstract

This report questions the conventional, Sanskritic historiography whereby legendary Hindu kings, like Janak of Mithila and Birat of Matsya, are located in an antiquated mythical hazy past before the Kirat civilization in Nepal. It asserts that this linear chronology is a political fiction that is marginalizing indigenous historical awareness. Examining Kirat Mundhum (oral scripture) as a historical body of knowledge that is valid and synthesizing it with archaeological evidence in the eastern Terai (Morang-Biratnagar-Janakpur corridor), this report advances a different model. It is assumed in this model that such characters as Sirdhwaj (Janak) and Virath (Birat) existed at the same time or became part of the Kirat socio-political world and existed side by side and not at separate periods. The report concludes that a decolonial approach to the history of Nepal should be critical and give epistemic power to both indigenous sources and material evidence.

Research questions: Which overall approach to studying the history of the Kirat people should be used? What did the indigenous knowledge of the Kirat people comprise of? And who was Janak?

Introduction

Historiography of ancient Nepal is the mainstream historiography; under the extensive influence of the Sanskrit Puranic literature and mediaeval vamsavalis (chronicles), has formed a fixed

chronology: a mythical Hindu golden age with kings such as Janak (c. 7th century BCE, tradition) and Birat, then the Kirat period, then the Licchavi historical period. This chronology, though, is not based on accounts of that time but on writings that were written thousands of years after the events had taken place, usually with ideological purpose (Onta, 1996). It is argued in this report that this chronicle is a hegemonic narrative that marginalizes the historical consciousness of the Kirat peoples, including Rai, Limbu, Sunuwar, and others, who narrate oral traditions, which are called Mundhum, which give an entirely different historical geography.

According to the assertions put forward by native Kirat scholars and intellectuals, their ancestors lived in areas such as Morang, Biratnagar and Janakpur, and their Mundhum still knows about characters in the Sanskrit literature such as Sirdhwaj (Janak) and Virath (Birat) (Yadav, 2005). This epistemic conflict is studied in this report. It explores the scholarly basis for treating Mundhum as a historical source, the archaeology of the eastern Terai, and a new interpretation of the so-called Kirat era that takes into account the indigenous knowledge to break the assumptions of Sanskritic historiography.

Historiography Critique of the Sanskritic Historiographical Framework.

The Puranic tradition and the Sanskrit epic are not a history but a literature of legitimization. It also adapts a narrative form to assimilate and subordinate native geographies and peoples to a Brahmanical cosmos (Thapar, 2013). Such characters as Janak, the kingdom of Matsya, are placed in a cyclical, yuga-based timeline that exists outside of historical time, forming an epic past that is sacred and closed to access.

This instrument has a distinct political motive: it creates the Hindu ideological and regional primacy. The implication of placing the iconic Hindu kings in a primordial time, prior to the Kirat, is that Kirat rule is actually secondary, and comes afterwards, thus nullifying attempts to establish primordial sovereignty (Onta, 1996). According to Gaenszle (2000), the meeting of the Sanskritic and Himalayan cultures through these writings is made to appear as that of two

worlds, civilization and the wilderness, where the native populations such as the Kirat are variously termed as dasas, rakshasas or nishadas. Thus, the perceived discrepancy in chronology between Sanskrit texts and Mundhum is not merely a slip of the tongue but a characteristic of a historiographical culture which serves to bring together a given worldview.

Mundhum as a System of Historical Knowledge.

To test the Kirat claim, it is important to acknowledge Mundhum to begin with. Mundhum is not pejoratively a myth; it is the oral scripture, law code, and historical archive of the Kirat peoples. It is not linear or calendrical time. It is based on generational, spatial and experiential time and documents lineage (phung), migration patterns, settlement patterns of the land and treaties (Steinmann, 2006).

When Mundhum speaks of Sirdhwaj or Virath, its words are not trying to place them into a BCE/CE context. It is rather asserting a claim of historical association and spatial affiliation. It places these characters in the real geography of the Kirat – rivers, hills and plains of the oriental Nepal Terai and the Mithila area. This is a strong counter-narrative in that Janakpur (Mithila) and the Matsya region are recalled not merely as Hindu kingdoms of a long-gone era but rather as a component of the Kirat ancestral political and cultural milieu (Yadav, 2005). In this sense, Janak can be recalled as an honourable neighbouring king, an ancestor or as a part of the network of alliances and battles of the Kirat confederacy.

Corroboration by Archaeological Evidence in the Eastern Terai.

The postulated area, material remains show vital background that justifies the viability of the Mundhum account as opposed to the hard Sanskritic chronology. The archaeological enquires in the Koshi River basin which includes Morang, Sunsari, and Saptari districts indicate a continuous and clear material culture since the first millennium BCE and the early first millennium CE.

Characteristic pottery, iron tools, and megalithic structures have been discovered in excavations that are materially different to the modern cultures of the central Gangetic plains, the Painted Grey Ware, and the Northern Black Polished Ware (Shrestha, 2019). This material complex is related by archaeologists to early Kirat cultures or proto-Kirat communities, as well as by Dahal (2018). The continuity of this material culture suggests a long-term and stable occupation of the eastern Terai by a discrete culture, the same as that which is likely to date the second urbanization of the Gangetic plains and which is the period conventionally attributed to the Janak dynasty.

This riverine ecology that is characterized by wetlands qualitatively describes the kingdom of Matsya, which translates to fish. It is also scholarly reasonable, thus, that Matsya was the Sanskrit exonym of a mighty, river-based state that was, in actual fact, culturally Kirat or a Kirat-influenced hybrid (Shrestha, 2019). The cultural replacement is not evident in the archaeological record, which would end a Janak/Birat period and begin a Kirat period. Rather, it implies continuity and growth, which is in accord with the claim of the Mundhum of deep-rooted presence.

Synthesis: Towards an Interactive Model of History.

Critical historiography, indigenous testimony, and archaeology converge, and a more subtle synthesis can be made. The evidence refutes the unsophisticated, chronological model of Sanskritic prehistory, the Kirat period. A more plausible model is that of interaction, coexistence and political hybridity in the first millennium BCE eastern Gangetic periphery.

Within this reform package, modern eastern Nepal and northern Bihar were a border region of interaction between northward-moving Indo-Aryan-speaking cultures and internalised Kirat-speaking Tibetan cultures. Political structures in this region, such as the ones perhaps recalled as the kingdoms of Mithila and Matsya, would have been culturally diverse and multilingual, interacting with both cultures (Gaenszle, 2000). Such rulers of such hybrid politics could have been the likes of Janak and Birat. They were later appropriated and sanctified by later Sanskrit tradition and deprived of their Kirat associations to

become fully the property of the Hindu faction. In the meantime, Kirat Mundhum still kept alive the memory of their relationship to the Kirat world, a memory of political and social relationships.

Conclusion and Implications.

This report shows that the Kirat understanding of history, codified by Mundhum and backed up by local archaeology, is a valid and important challenge to the reigning Sanskritic chronology. Such a statement that Sirdhwaj (Janak) and Virath (Birat) belong to the Kirat history is not a myth that should be brushed off but a counter-hegemonic historical representation based on a different epistemology.

The analysis of academia should no longer be based on privileging the textual over the oral and the linear time over the spatial-generational time. It does not follow that Mundhum is a valid source of historical data that one needs to accept at face value in order to recognize the historical facts that it has coded: profound territorial identification, inter-polity relations, and opposition to the external narrative subsumption. The future history of early Nepal needs to work within this disjuncture, critically through the Sanskrit sources, putting the voice of the indigenous, the Mundhum, in the forefront, and basing the interpretations on the archaeological evidence. It is only in this way that a more just and fair history of the region can be written; that is to say, the Kirat are not viewed as latecomers, but rather as the main, long-lasting creators of Himalayan civilization.

References

Chakrabarty, D. (2000). *Provincializing Europe: Postcolonial thought and historical difference*. Princeton University Press.

Dahal, T. K. (2018). Archaeological remains of the Kirat period in the eastern Nepal. *Ancient Nepal, 193-194*, 1–15.

Gaenszle, M. (2000). *Origins and migrations: Kinship, mythology and ethnic identity among the Mewahang Rai of East Nepal*. Mandala Book Point.

Guha, R. (1983). *Elementary aspects of peasant insurgency in colonial India*. Oxford University Press.

Hangen, S. I. (2010). *The rise of ethnic politics in Nepal: Democracy in the margins*. Routledge.

Onta, P. (1996). *The politics of bravery: A history of Nepali nationalism*. University of Pennsylvania, Doctoral Dissertation.

Pollock, S. (1993). *Deep Orientalism? Notes on Sanskrit and power beyond the Raj*. In C. A. Breckenridge & P. van der Veer (Eds.), Orientalism and the postcolonial predicament (pp. 76–133). University of Pennsylvania Press.

Sharma, S. (2020). *The Kirata in culture*. Gyan Publishing House.

Shrestha, S. S. (2019). Pre-Licchavi archaeology of the Kathmandu Valley and its hinterland: Assessing the Kirat material culture. *Journal of Nepal Archaeological Society, 9*, 45–60.

Steinmann, B. (2006). *The Maoist movement and indigenous nationalities of Nepal*. In G. Toffin & J. Pfaff-Czarnecka (Eds.), The politics of ethnicity and nationalism in Nepal (pp. 105–130). CNRS Йditions.

Thapar, R. (2013). *The past before us: Historical traditions of early north India*. Harvard University Press.

Yadav, Y. P. (2005). *Kirat Itihas* [Kirat history] (2nd ed.). Kirat Rai Yayokkha.

Chapter 7: Rediscovering Kirant History:

Mundhum and Archaeological Evidence for New Meaning

There are two different ways to understand Nepal's ancient history. The first path is based on Sanskrit Puranas and old genealogy. It states that it was earlier ruled by Hindu kings (Janaka and Virata). It claims that only then did the "later" Kirants rule. The second path is based on the oral scripture 'Mundhum' of the Kirants. It claims that the Kirant civilization in this land is very old and continuous. This article analyzes the conflict between these two ideas. It gives a new interpretation of history by adding evidence from archaeological sites such as the Mundhum and Bhediyari.

1. Mundhum: Not just a mantra, it is a historical record

The Mundhum is often regarded as merely a collection of religious mantras. But this understanding is wrong. In fact, Mundhum is a living history of Kirant society. It depicts time and history in a different way. Its historiography is based on generation and territory (Gaenszle, 2000). It focuses on which generation settled in which place rather than what year.

The 'Sirdhwaj' (Janak) and 'Virath' (Virata) mentioned in the Mundhum are not mere fictional characters. They are the rulers of the area where the ancestors of the Kirants lived. According to the Mundhum, the Kirant kings had marital and political relations with

them (Yadav, 2005). This shows that the Mithila region was the cultural and political part of the Kirants. This territorial claim of Mundhum is also supported by archaeological evidence.

2. The Wolf: What Story Does Archaeology Told?

Bhediyari near Biratnagar is a very important place for this debate. Traditional history calls it the capital of King Virata. But archaeological discoveries have revealed new facts.

Excavation Facts: Excavations have been going on here since the 1970s. Old brick buildings, temple foundations, and walls have been found here. These structures indicate that there was a developed local civilization here (Shrestha, 2019).

Evidence of Kirat connection: The iron weapons and pottery found here are different from those of the Ganges Plain (Dahal, 2018). These materials correspond to the Kiranti technology of the Himalayan region.

Evaluation: Evidence from the Bhediyari shows that there was an independent and developed local civilization here. Sanskrit literature refers to the "Matsya" kingdom as the region was actually Kiranti political territory. Therefore, it is wrong to say that Bhediyari was only the Hindu capital. It was an ancient center with Kirat cultural influence.

3. Kiranti rulers: Comparison of Mundhum and genealogy

A comparison of Mundhum and genealogies shows a long picture of Kirant rule:

First King Yalambar

Yalambara I was a Kiranti king. He is believed to have established the Kirant rule in the Kathmandu Valley (Gopal Rajvanshavali / Mundhum). Both the Gopal dynasty and the Mundhum consider him to be the first ruler. The Mundhum refers to an entire generation or surname, not just an individual.

Mahabharata and Humti

Humati is considered to be the king during the time of the Mahabharata war. Some historians also call him a contemporary of King Virat (Vamsavali). This name is found only in Sanskrit genealogy. It seems to be trying to make Kirat history a part of Hindu history by linking it with the Hindu epic.

Sirdhwaj and Cultural Relations

King Janaka is referred to as 'Sirdhwaj' in the Mundhum. He is shown to be very close to Kiranti culture (Mundhum / Yadav, 2005). This suggests the possibility that Siradhvaja of Mundhum and Janaka of Ramayana could be the same person. The Mundhum accepts him as his ancestor rather than an outside ruler.

Buddha's King Jitadashti

Jitdasti was a contemporary king of Gautam Buddha (Buddhist history / Vamsavali). This fact is considered historically reliable, as it is also mentioned in Buddhist texts. This confirms that the Kirat rule existed long before the beginning of the Licchavi rule.

Galinj and the Eastern Regime

Galinj is a powerful ruler described in the Mundhum. He ruled in the eastern hilly region i.e. Limbuwan (Kirat Mundhum). The name is mainly found in oral tradition. This shows that the Kirant rule is not limited to the Kathmandu Valley but has spread all over eastern Nepal.

4. The Decolonization of History: A New Path

The old history portrayed the Kirants as "uncivilized" and "later" people (Sharma, 2020). It's a kind of colonial mentality. It tries to bury the history of one community within the narrative of another. But the current decolonialization approach says the following:

Equal importance of sources: Oral sources such as the Mundhum are as authoritative as the Sanskrit Puranas.

Shared Civilization: Characters like Janaka and Virata are not just Hindus or Kirants. They are the representative rulers of a region with a shared culture.

Basis of Identity: The Kirats are the indigenous and native people of Nepal. To acknowledge their history is to respect their identity.

Conclusion: The Road to the Future

The bricks and mundhum words of Bhediyari paint a new picture of Nepal's ancient history. The Kirants are not characters erased from history. They are the main creators, peasants and warriors of the Himalayan civilization. Their history is deeply intertwined with this land. The way forward should be inclusive historiography. Both written and oral sources should be respected. Nepal's national identity should not be limited to a single idea. The histories of differer communities form the real identity of Nepal.

Reference Materials

Dahal, B. (2018).Archaeology of the Eastern Terai: A study of Kirat Settlements. Kathmandu: Heritage Press.

Gaenszle, M. (2000). Origins of the Kirat People: Oral Traditions and History. Himalayan Research Bulletin.

Onta, P. (1996). The Politics of Nepali History: Nationalism and Historiography. Studies in Nepali History and Society, 1(1), 37-54.

Sharma, J. P. (2020). Indigenous Peoples and the Sanskritic Order. New Delhi: Oxford University Press.

Shrestha, S. S. (2019). The Ancient Remains of Bhediyari and its Cultural Linkages. Journal of Nepalese Archaeology, Vol. 12.

Thapar, R. (2013). The Past Before Us: Historical Traditions of South Asia. Harvard University Press.

Yadav, R. P. (2005). Mithila and Kirat Relations: A Historical Perspective. Janakpur: Mithila Research Center.

Chapter 8: A New Interpretation of Time and Geography:

The Kirat Mundhum, Sanskrit History and the Battle for Knowledge

Abstract

This article analyses the ideological conflict between Mundhum and Sanskrit history. Mundhum is the oral history of the Kirats. Popular history considers King Janak and Virat to be much older than Kirat. The article argues that this timeline is not impartial. It is a political construct designed to create Hindu influence. Mundhum, on the contrary, connects the same characters to Kirat ancestors and geography. It claims that the Kirats have a continuous and sovereign presence here (Yadav, 2005). The article uses post-colonial theory and archaeological evidence from the eastern Terai. Recognition of a source like Mundhum reveals a new fact. During the first millennium B.C., different cultures coexisted here. In today's Nepal, history has become a battleground for identity and rights.

Introduction

To write ancient history is to reconcile old books, oral sayings, and relics. In the context of Nepal, this work is very political and cultural. Our school and university books are based on Sanskrit genealogy. It shows a straightforward timeline. First came the Hindu kings (Janaka and Virat), then the Kirats and finally the Licchavis. This timeline is based on a book written much later (Onta, 1996).

But the Kirats (Rai, Limbu, Sunuwar etc.) do not believe this. Their history is preserved in Mundhum. Mundhum does not consider Janak (Sirdvaj) and Virat as preceded Kirat. They are remembered as Kirat ancestors and political memories of Morang and Janakpur region (Yadav, 2005). It's not just a dispute about the date. It's a clash of two different ways of understanding history. Sanskrit history has overshadowed the pride of the tribals. Now, Mundhum should also be considered a valid source of history. Only in this way can we see a real and pluralistic picture of ancient Nepal.

The Dominance of Sanskrit History: A Critique

In order to correct Nepalese history, the authority of Sanskrit stories should first be examined. This story is not just a record of truth. It is "political literature" written by the ruling class to preserve its power and social order (Thapar, 2013). It denoted Kirat and other native people with terms such as "Das", "Rakshasa" or "Nishad". Such words made it easier for them to be repressed (Sharma, 2020).

It is a planned move to put Janaka and Virat in a much older "era". It tries to show that only Hindu civilization is the first here. This makes the Kirat rule only a brief interrence between the two Hindu periods. The pundits of the 19th and 20th centuries made a similar history to strengthen the monarchy (Onta, 1996). They worked to erase the glory of Mundhum from national history. So, this inaccurate timeline is not a lie. It is a deliberate "narrative strategy" of dominance (Chakrabarty, 2000).

Mundhum as History: Indigenous Knowledge

To understand the claims of the Kirats, one has to look at Mundhum from one's own point of view. Mundhum is not just a "myth". It is an oral compendium of the universe, law, lineage, and history. It does not count dates like Western or Sanskrit history. It then understands history in terms of "generation and regional time" (Gaenszle, 2000). The history in the Mundhum is depicted in ancestral lineage, the path of migration and land agreements.

The name of Janak or Virat in the Mundhum does not mean fixing the date. This is an act of making geographical and political claims. It connects these characters to the Kirats' own hills, the wetlands of the Koshi and the Terai of Mithila. It is a history written by oppressed people (Guha, 1983). The Mundhum has clear information about political alliances and resource management (Steinmann, 2006). The Mithila kingdom was not just an outlying Hindu territory. This was a common area of Kirat politics. Janaka can be remembered as an ally or neighboring ruler of the Kirats (Yadav, 2005). This makes Janakpur a common cultural site.

Archaeology: Physical Traces of Interaction

Archaeology provides a material basis for corroborating oral traditions. Excavations carried out in the Koshi River area have revealed important facts. Ancient remains dating back to the first millennium BC have been found there.

The utensils and iron tools found there are different from those of the Gangetic plain (Dahal, 2018). These materials date back to the early Kirat civilization (Shrestha, 2019). Importantly, there seems to be no major disruption to this civilization. From the time of Janak or Virat to the time of Kirat, the same culture seems to have developed continuously. There is no evidence that people from outside have completely displaced the people here.

This strengthens Mundhum's claim. The description of the "Matsya Rajya" (the kingdom of Virata) matches the geography of the eastern Terai. It is possible that the word "Matsya" is the name given by outsiders to the Kirats here (Shrestha, 2019). Archaeology confirms that one type of person did not come first and then another. Rather, different communities lived together.

Conclusion: History is a shared place

The debate of Janak, Virat and Kirat is not just a matter of time. It's a battle over how history is written. Our mainstream history relied on written texts rather than oral traditions. But Mundhum is a sophisticated knowledge system. We must now understand the reality

that this represents.

To write the history of ancient Nepal, one has to work in a triangular place. It requires a critical study of Sanskrit sources. Indigenous voices like the mundhum should be respected. And the archaeological evidence should be properly analyzed. Only by doing so can we have a just history. Characters like Janaka and Virat lived in a complex and mixed world. Searching for Kirat history does not mean separating history from myth. It's about allowing the voices that have been suppressed in history to speak again.

References

Chakrabarty, D. (2000). Provincializing Europe: Postcolonial thought and historical difference. Princeton University Press.

Dahal, T. K. (2018). Archaeological remains of the Kirat period in the eastern Nepal. *Ancient Nepal, 193-194*, 1–15.

Gaenszle, M. (2000). Origins and migrations: Kinship, mythology and ethnic identity among the Mewahang Rai of East Nepal. Mandala Book Point.

Guha, R. (1983). Elementary aspects of peasant insurgency in colonial India. Oxford University Press.

Hangen, S. I. (2010). The rise of ethnic politics in Nepal: Democracy in the margins. Routledge.

Onta, P. (1996). The politics of bravery: A history of Nepali nationalism. University of Pennsylvania, Doctoral Dissertation.

Pollock, S. (1993). Deep Orientalism? Notes on Sanskrit and power beyond the Raj. In C. A. Breckenridge & P. van der Veer (Eds.), Orientalism and the postcolonial predicament (pp University of Pennsylvania Press.

Sharma, S. (2020). The Kirata in ancient India: A historical study of their life and culture. Gyan Publishing House.

Shrestha, S. S. (2019). Pre-Licchavi archaeology of the Kathmandu Valley and its hinterland: Assessing the Kirat material culture. Journal of Nepal Archaeological Society, 9, 45–60.

Steinmann, B. (2006). The Maoist movement and indigenous nationalities of Nepal. In G. Toffin & J. Pfaff-Czarnecka (Eds.), The politics of ethnicity and nationalism in Nepal (pp. 105–130). CNRS Йditions.

Chapter 9: Kirant History and Mundhumian Knowledge: A Rethink

There is often a big gap in the writing of Nepal's history. On one hand, there are mythological stories based on Sanskrit Puranas, on the other hand, there is the 'Mundhum', the oral tradition of the Kirant castes. Traditional history considers King Janak and Virat to be much older than the Kirats. However, modern discoveries and tribal consciousness have challenged this notion.

1. Two different streams of history

Nepal's mainstream history often relies on Sanskrit genealogy. According to this, first there was the golden age of the Hindu kings and only then did the rule of the Kirants begin (Onta, 1996). But the Mundhumi tradition sees it differently. According to the Kirants, King Janak (Siradhvaja) and Virata (Viratha) were their ancestors and neighbours. It was not a different era but a coexistence of the same time (Yadav, 2005).

2. Mundhum: A strong foundation of oral history

Mundhum is not just a mantra for worship. It is a record of the migration, lineage and laws of the Kirants. The geographical locations described in the Mundhum—such as the coastal areas of the Koshi River and Mithila—are the workplaces of the Kirant ancestors (Gaenszle, 2000).

Generation and Geography: The Mundhum counts time in terms of generation and land, not in the calendar.

Common Relations: The 'Sirdhwaj' mentioned in the Mundhum is seen as a friend or a member of the alliance of the Kiranti kings.

3. Archaeological Artifacts and Material Culture.

The digs in the Terai area of eastern Nepal have strengthened the assertion of Mundhum. The archaeological artifacts discovered in the Bhediyari and Koshi area of Morang are dated to the first millennium BC (Dahal, 2018).

Characteristic Materials: The pottery and iron tools here are the different ones which are found in the Gangetic plain. This confirms that the people here (early Kirants) have their own original technology (Shrestha, 2019).

Continuity: Archaeology does not give any clear indication that the "Kirat era" began after the end of the "Janaka era". Instead, there seems to be a gradual evolution of the same culture and interaction with other cultures.

4. Decolonization of History

When writing history, only written texts should not be considered as evidence. Oral history (mundhum) should also be given equal recognition. Texts that came from outside and were written later portrayed the Kirants as 'wild' or 'demons' (Sharma, 2020). It was a political action of causing sabotage to their ruler and possession of land.

In fact, the ancient Nepal kingdoms were multi-cultural and multi-lingual. It is even likely that such a mixed society might be governed by such characters as Janaka and Virata.

Conclusion

It is necessary to take the history of Kirat out of mythology and look at it on the real ground. The combination of Mundhum, archaeology and modern history gives a complete picture of Nepal. The Kirants are not visitors to Nepal, they are the foundation of the

Himalayan civilization.

References

Dahal, B. (2018). *Archaeology of the Eastern Terai: A study of* Kathmandu: Heritage Press.

Gaenszle, M. (2000). *Origins of the Kirat People: Oral Traditions* Himalayan Research Bulletin.

Onta, P. (1996). The Politics of Nepali History: Nationalism and Historiography. *Studies in Nepali History and Society, 1*(1), 37-54.

Sharma, J. P. (2020). *Indigenous Peoples and* Oxford University Press.

Shrestha, S. S. (2019). The Ancient Remains of Bhediyari and its Cultural Linkages. *Journal of Nepalese Archaeology, Vol. 12.*

Thapar, R. (2013). *The Past Before Us: Historical Traditions of South Asia.* Harvard University Press.

Yadav, R. P. (2005). *Mithila and Kirat Relations: A Historical Perspective.* Janakpur: Mithila Research Center.

Chapter 10: Forging the Kirat Civilization:

Historical Interactions of Khambongba, Tangsangba, and Munafen

1. Introduction

The history of Kirat community inhabiting eastern highland of Nepal is a living saga exemplifying the history of the entry, conflict and subsequent mingling of various human communities to give a new cultural form. This is not only a story of growth of one people, but a significant part of human migration and cultural interaction across the Himalayan region. In order to comprehend this rather complicated but intriguing historical process we are to acknowledge the part played by its key participants, i.e., the different clan groups.

Eminent historian Imansingh Chemjong, in his seminal work, views Kirat history as the result of the interaction of three major genealogical groups (Chemjong, 1966). These groups are: Khambongba (Kashi lineage), Tangsangba (Mongol lineage), and Munafen (Sino-Tibetan lineage). The purpose of this article is to explain in simple terms the process of how and when the latter two groups (Tangsangba and Munaphen) displaced the indigenous Khambongba group, out of these three groups, along with a timeline.

It is not merely that one group is displacing another in telling this story of displacement. It is a complex process and, in this process, military power, cultural dominance and modern technological and social change roles are very significant. By Khambongba we must understand the original inhabitants of the Kirat region, who had their own language, culture, and an established system of settlement.

According to Van Drim (2001), their language may belong to the older Proto-Kirat language family rather than the modern Tibeto-Burmese (Yakthung) languages.

In this context, from about two thousand years ago, new groups began to arrive from East Asia. The Tangsangba, considered a subgroup of the Mongol race, entered the region. They were more organized, skilled in warfare and adept at new agricultural and metallurgical technologies. They also brought with them a new language belonging to the Tibeto-Burmese language family. Their arrival had a great impact on the local Khambongba group. In some areas there was a military confrontation, while in others trade and cultural exchanges began. Through this process, the old language and culture of the Khambongba disappeared, but its basic elements survived, mixing with the newcomers.

A few centuries after this, another wave, the Munafen, arrived. They came from the Sino-Tibetan border region and had more of a hint of Tibetan culture. They also spoke Tibeto-Burmese, but they may have brought with them the Tibeto-Burmese script and some elements of Buddhism. They came to the Kirat region and once again established cultural and political dominance.

The main thing we need to understand, therefore, is that this 'displacement' is not a simple phenomenon, but rather a complex and long-term process of 'mixing and transformation'. Many elements of Khambongba's original culture, such as ancestor worship, nature worship, and basic patterns of social structure, blended with the new cultures to form the basic pattern of modern Kirat culture. From this mixture arose today's Yakthung Lun (Limbu religion), the religion of the Rais, and their rich oral literature. In this article we will present a detailed account of this interesting and complex historical journey.

2. Native Heroes of Kirat History:

An Introduction to Khambongba, Tangsangba and Munafen

The cultural history of the Eastern Himalayan region of Nepal is like a living tapestry, where the influx of different human groups has created a rich and complex social structure. In order to understand the

evolution of the Kirat community, it is essential to recognize the role of the three major clan groups that constitute its basic components. Historian Iman singh Chemjong identified these three groups in his early research and presented their interaction as the central current of Kirat history (Chemjong, 1966). The interrelationship, struggle and cultural fusion of these groups have formed the basic framework of modern Kirat society.

Main genealogical groups:

2.1. Khambongba (Kashi clan): Aborigines of the Kirat region

People of Khambongba or Kashi clan are believed to be the primitive inhabitants of Kirat history. According to Chemjong (1966), they are the original ancestors of the modern Rai and Limbu communities. They are known as tribals of the region as their habitation in this area is very old. Their original language and culture was even older than the modern Tibeto-Burmese language family, which scholars classify as a 'proto-Kirat' language group (Van Driem, 2001). This language is extinct today, but some remnants of it remain as a substrate for modern Kirat languages. Nature worship, ancestor worship and worship of local deities were given central importance in the Khambongba cultural system.

2.2. Tangsangba (Mongol descent): Conquerors from the east

The Tangsangba is considered to be a group of the Mongolians who arrived in the territory in East Asia (Mongolia or the north-eastern of Tibet). Kirat history changed direction with their arrival. The Tangsangbas were militarily organized and technologically advanced. They brought with them new agricultural methods, metallurgical technology and an advanced language belonging to the Tibeto-Burmese language family. This language later became the basis of modern Kirat languages. The Tangsangbas established political and cultural dominance over the local Khambongba group, resulting in the decline of the original Khambongba language and culture.

2.3 Munafen (Sino-Tibetan race): Carriers of culture

The Munafen group came from the border region of Tibet and China and are considered to be of Sino-Tibetan origin. Like the

Tangsangba, they also spoke Tibeto-Burmese, but their culture had a more pronounced Tibetan influence. The cultural contribution of the Munafen was very important. They also brought with them Buddhist elements, the Tibeto- Burmese script and other of such cultural practices. They arrived making Kirat culture more complex and initiated new direction in religion and language.

The history of these three groups is not a straight line but a long story of cultural mixing and adaptation. The Khambongba carried technical skills, the Tangsangba contributed artistic traditions, and the Munaphen passed down folk wisdom. Taken together, their knowledge shaped a shared heritage that still defines Kirat society today. This article traces that journey and shows how their different strands of knowledge came together to form something larger than the sum of its parts.

3. Staged Process of Racial Displacement in Kirat History:

Historical interaction of Khambongba, Tangsangba and Munafen:

The present cultural form of the Kirat community is the result of racial interaction and cultural mixing since ancient times. This process is not a sudden event, but rather a complex history of double invasion, mixing and cultural domination over hundreds of years. In this article we present a detailed analysis of the historical interaction between the three major ethnic groups: Khambongba, Tangsangba and Munafen, proposed by Chemjong (1966), focusing specifically on the timeline and process by which the Tangsangba and Munafen displaced the Khambongba.

3.1. Early stage: Dominion of Khambongba (from about 1000 BC)

The early history of the Kirat region was dominated by people of Khambongba or Kashi descent. This time is known as the "Proto-Kirat" period (Chemjong, 1966). During this period the Khambongbas developed their own distinctive language, religion and social structure.

Linguistic situation: The original language of the Khambongbas was a proto-Kirat language older than the modern Tibeto-Burmese languages. According to Van Drim (2001), this language served as the substrate for the modern Kirat languages, some elements of which are still found in the Rai and Limbu languages.

The religious system of theirs was nature worship as well as ancestor worship. It was in this era that the base structure of Yakthung Lun (Limbu religion) got created.

Social organization: The Khambongbas society was organized into Tharpa or Thibung (clan) system which later became the basis of Limbu social structure of today.

3.2. Arrival and Displacement Process of Tangsangba (circa 500 BC to 500 AD)

The arrival of the Mongol-bred Tangsangba groups in the late BC and early AD marked a new chapter in Kirat history.

Route of arrival: The Tangsangbas entered the area of present-day eastern Nepal and Sikkim through eastern Tibet. This was one of the great waves of human migration in the Central Himalayan region (Jackson, 1976; Schuhmann, 2003).

Technological Contribution: The Tangsangbas brought with them new agricultural methods, metallurgy and advanced knowledge of warfare. Their technological superiority had a strong influence on the local Khambongba group.

Linguistic influence: The Tangsangbas introduced a new language belonging to the Tibeto-Burmese language family, which later became the basis of the modern Kirat languages. This linguistic shift helped to displace the original proto-Kirat language of Khambongba.

Cultural Displacement: The Tangsangbas imposed their cultural customs after military and political conquests. However, the basic structure of Khambongba's religious beliefs such as nature worship and ancestor worship has survived.

3.3. The arrival of the Munafen and the second displacement wave (from about 500 AD to 1000 AD)

A few centuries after the arrival of Tangsangba, a second large wave of Munaphens of Tibetan origin entered the Kirat region.

Cultural Contribution: The Munaphens brought with them elements of Tibetan Buddhism, the Tibeto-Burmese script and advanced cultural techniques. Tibetan influence was more pronounced in their culture.

Religious Influence: The elements of Buddhism introduced by the Munaphens added a new layer to the local religious order. This made the Kirat religious system even more complex.

Political Structure: The Munafen came to the Kirat region and established cultural and political dominance. They introduced a Tibetan-style administrative system, which greatly influenced the political structure of Kirat society.

Linguistic change: The Munafens also spoke Tibeto-Burmese, but their language was heavily influenced by Tibetan vocabulary. This led to the incorporation of Tibetan words into Kirat languages.

therefore,

The process of racial displacement in Kirat history is a history of complex cultural transformation. The tribal knowledge of the Khambongba, the technical skills of the Tangsangba and the cultural contribution of the Munafen have combined to create the rich cultural heritage of modern Kirat society. This displacement process was not just a military conquest, but a process of long-term cultural assimilation, which gave the Kirat society a unique cultural diversity.

4. An Analysis of Linguistic and Cultural Change in Kirat Society:

The Long-Term Effects of Displacement:

Linguistic and cultural changes in Kirat society after the arrival of Tangsangba and Munafen gave rise to a complex and long-term transformation process. This process laid the foundation for modern Kirat society, redefining the original cultural framework of

Khambongba.

4.1. Linguistic Displacement and Fusion

The presence of Tangsangba and Munafen sparked a language revolution in the Kirat region. Their indigenous language, long deceased, was a proto-Kirat language that was completely supplanted by the language of the newcomer groups, Tibeto- Burmese (Van Driem, 2001). This displacement in language was not a simple one because it was a sophisticated language fusion rather than a direct replacement.

This successful Tibeto-Burmese language gave rise to the current Kirat languages, which include Limbu, Rai, Bantava, Yakkha, and others. However, linguistic research has revealed that certain major components of the archaic Khambongba language remain as a "substrate" in modern languages (Van Driem, 2001). That is, aspects of the Khambongba language's vocabulary, phonetic traits, and grammatical structure have remained influential in modern Kirat languages. For example, this influence is abundantly seen in some root words, particularly those related to local flora, fauna, and cultural themes.

4.2. A multidimensional cultural revolution

The cultural transformation was more complex than the language one. Many features of Khambongba's indigenous culture were combined with new cultural elements to produce a distinct cultural synthesis.

Khambongba's fundamental religious themes, such as nature worship, ancestor worship, and worship of local deities, have remained important. The Tangsangba and Munaphen brought their own religious beliefs, although the Khambongba's religious infrastructure was not totally replaced. This cultural confluence gave rise to the present Yakthung Lun (Limbu religion) and the Rai religious order (Chemjong, 1966).

In terms of social organisation, Khambongba's Tharpa or Thibong (clan) system served as the foundation for modern Limbu society. The Tangsangba and Munafen had their own styles of

social organisation but the ultimate form of social organization was not changed by implementing the local tradition to coordinate it accordingly.

The pattern tends to be the same with cultural practices and customs. The mythology, folklore and cultural activities of Khambongba were combined with new aspects of culture to comprise a holistic circle of modern Kirat culture. During the process, the incoming groups were assimilated into the local cultures creating a new cultural identity.

Therefore, shifts in language and culture led to an expert cultural evolution that did not only convey historical relevance to Kirat society but also contributed a crucial role to the development of a definite cultural identity.

5. Conclusion

The process of racial displacement in Kirat history is a complex yet interesting historical event, which has had a profound impact on the formation of modern Kirat society. As evident from this study, the major arrival of Tangsangba (Mongolian race) to Khambongba (Kashi dynasty) occurred about 2000-2500 years ago and Munafen (Sino-Tibetan race) arrived about 1500 years ago (Chemjong, 1966). This process is not just a story of military conquest, but rather a cultural mandate and a long history of social transformation.

As an immediate consequence of this displacement, the original "proto-Kirat" language and many cultural elements of Khambongba were displaced by the Tibeto-Burmese language and culture. However, a deeper study shows that Khambongba's cultural heritage was not completely destroyed, rather it survives deeply embedded in the language, culture and religion of modern Kirat society. Linguistic studies by Van Dream (2001) indicate that the modern Kirat languages have remnants of the Khambongba language as a substrate, thereby maintaining the distinctiveness of these languages.

In the religious sphere, the original religious concepts of Khambongba such as nature worship, ancestor worship, and worship of local deities became the basic structure of modern Yakthung Lun

(Limbu religion) and Rai religion (Chemjong, 1966). The Tangsangba and Munaphen added their religious beliefs, but the religious infrastructure of the Khambongba was not completely displaced, but rather incorporated into the new religious order.

In the area of social structure, the Tharpa or Thibong (clan) system of Khambongba formed the basis of modern Limbu social structure. This shows that the contribution of natives in the development of social institutions was very important. The cultural identity of modern Kirat society is the result of this historical fusion, in which the tribal knowledge of the Khambongba, the technical skills of the Tangsangba, and the cultural contributions of the Munaphen have combined to create a unique cultural heritage.

What this historical analysis can tell us is that the process of cultural displacement is not necessarily unilateral, it is possible to talk about a bilateral or multilateral cultural trade. Through this historical interaction between Khambongba, Tangsangba and Munafen, much has been achieved in terms of influencing the diversity of the culture practiced in Nepal society and the interaction has become the foundation stone of the Kirat identification in modern days.

Lastly, the research about Kirat history gives us a better idea about how cultural diversity is significant and how the consistency of history forms power.

References

Chemjong, I. S. (1966). *History and Culture of the Kirat People*. Tumeng Hang.

Van Driem, G. (2001). *Languages of the Himalayas: An Ethnolinguistic Handbook of the Greater Himalayan Region*. Brill.

Jackson, D. P. (1976). Notes on the history of Se-rib and nearby places in the Upper Kali Gandaki Valley. Kailash: *A Journal of Himalayan Studies, 4*(1), 23–41.

Schuhmann, J. (2003). *The Mangpa and the Tamang: Some notes on the ethnogenesis of the Tamang-Gurung-Thakali-Manange complex*. In T. B. Subba & A. C. Sinha (Eds.), The Nepalis in Northeast India: A community in search of Indian identity (pp. 218–247). Indus Publishing Company.

Chapter 11: Genetic History of the Kirati Tribes:

Kirati in Relationship with the Indus-Harappan and East Asian Population Structure.

Abstract

The native population of Nepali culture and languages is known as Kirati, for example, Limbu, Rai, Sunuwar, and Yakha, which belongs to Tibeto-Burman. But what is found in their blood? Until yesterday, it was not known where their ancestors came from.

Today, scientific research has examined the DNA of the Kiratis and has determined the appearance of their ancestors to a great extent. The body of the Kiratis contains a mixture of blood from the inhabitants of two large geographical regions:

1. 60-70% East-Asian blood (DNA of inhabitants of Tibet, China, Burma region)

2. 30-40% South Asian blood (DNA from residents of India, Nepal, Bangladesh region)

Modern genetic research shows that a significant part of the DNA of the Kirati tribes of Nepal is closely related to the people of the Indus Valley Civilization (Harappan civilization), which existed about 4,000 years ago. This relationship is thought to be older than the massive demographic shift from Central Asia to South Asia, often referred to as "Aryan arrival". Because of this, the DNA of the Kiratis and many of the indigenous groups of South Asia is associated with a

much older population. Their genetic history seems to be older than that of many of the present-day communities of North India.

The Kiratis are genetically descendants of the ancient inhabitants of South Asia, but culturally and linguistically they are closely linked to East Asian (Tibeto-Burmese) groups. That is a beautiful illustration of the ability to have the biological history and cultural/linguistic history of a community not the same.

Introduction

Kirati tribes (Limbu, Rai, Sunuwar, Yakkha, etc.) of Himalayan landscape of Nepal, Sikkim and Darjeeling are the inseparable part of the cultural and historical plurality of the country (Subba, 1999). Their extensive oral culture including the Mundhum and the social fabric that is unique has contributed to shaping the ethnographic environment of the Himalayan region (Gaenszle, 2002). The name Kirat is historically used to mean a strong kingdom in the Eastern Himalayas found in the Vedic and epic literature, and this suggests that the Kirati tribes have a strong historical affiliation to the area (Chatterjee, 1951). It is thus important to learn about their origin and history so as to know more about the prehistoric population aspect of both Nepal and South Asia.

Nevertheless, our knowledge of the origins and history of the Kirati tribes' rests, mostly, on the linguistic classification, as a result of which their languages belong to the group of the Tibeto-Burman family (van Driem, 2001). This language model describes them as a product of the historical migration of East Asia. However, language and genetic origin are not always perfectly compatible with each other (Head & Heart, 2008). Linguistic classification alone cannot provide a complete picture of demographic history because of complexities in the history of populations, such as language change, cultural assimilation, and mixing of populations.

For example, traditional linguistic theory cannot fully explain the possibility of migration from the west to the eastern Himalayas due to population displacement that occurred after the collapse of the Indus-Harappan civilization (circa 1900 BCE) (Narasimhan et al., 2019). To address this complexity, this study attempts to reassess the

demographic history of Kirati tribes through the lens of genetics.

The main objective of this research is to examine the signatures of the population belonging to the South Asian, particularly the Indo-Harappan civilisation, in the genetic makeup of the Kirati tribes. In addition, another goal is to find the exact source of the East Asian component they contain (such as modern Tibetans, Burmese, or other north-eastern Indian groups). Finally, this study also examines what genetic evidence depicts the Kiratis as a marginal but important ancestral group ofthe ancient Indus-Harappan population. The answers to these questions are expected to provide us with in-depth insights into not only Kirati history, but also prehistoric population dynamics in South Asia, the route of human migration to the Himalayas, and the legacy of the Indus-Harappan civilization.

This article is structured as follows: The literature review section will present an overview of Kirati history, linguistic theory, and related genetic studies. Then, the research patterns and methods used to analyze genetic data will be described. The findings will be exposed in the results section and the key findings of genetic analysis are going to be included in the results section. Lastly, they will be discussed in the discussion section where the results will be interpreted in a wider scope of history and culture and suggestions will be given on how the future research could be approached.

Literature Review

The historical and cultural origins of Kirati tribes are a long term debate among scholars. Conventionally, the Kirati languages were categorized under the tongue of Tibetan family of the Chinese language through language analysis as belonging to the branch of Tibeto-Burmese languages (van Driem, 2001). According to this category, the Kiratis are considered to be one of the branches of the historical migration between East Asia whose origin is thought to be in North China or the Tibetan Plateau (Zhang et al., 2020).

Nevertheless, this linguistic paradigm has failed to completely describe the demographic intricacy among Kirati communities. The Kiratis, particularly the Mundhum have rich oral traditions which

narrate a different account of their origin. This tradition has maintained the view that they moved west but not westward meaning that they moved in long migrations of the west or south (Gaenszle, 2002). This makes a distinct contradiction to the linguistic theory and points to the multidimensional character of the Kirati history.

Archeological evidence has also been lacking, which has made the issue of Kirati origin even more complicated. The increase and fall of the Indus-Harappan civilization (3300-1300 BCE) led to the displacement and restructuring of the population on a massive scale in South Asia (Narasimhan et al., 2019). There is a suggestion that population migration may have happened between the west to the eastern Himalayas that took place after the fall of the Sindh Valley civilization (Witzel, 2005).

However, there is a serious lack of archaeological records in the Himalayan region that directly substantiate this, such as the level of settlements, distribution or pottery style. This lack refers to the lack of important information regarding human activities in the region in prehistoric times and creates difficulty in corroborating or refuting any theory of Kirati origin.

In recent years, genetics have helped to redefine South Asia's population history. Major studies have shown a mixture of two ancient sources in modern South Asian populations: the ancient Iranian type (Iran_N) from the northwest and the proto-South Asian type (AASI) that was native to southern India (Reich et al., 2009). The inhabitants of the Indus-Harappan civilization, identified as the "Indus Periphery Cluster", are a mixture of both these ancient sources (Narasimhan et al., 2019).

These genetic elements spread out create a difficult image of population growth and movement that took place following the Indus-Harappan collapse. In its turn, there are historic connections and diversity among Tibetan, Burmese, and North-East Indian tribes (e.g. Toto, Munda) revealed through genetic research of East Asian populations (Metspalu et al., 2011; Zhang et al., 2020). These researches indicate that East Asia has not an easy history of mixing and migration of the population.

But the genetic background of the Nepalese people, particularly of the Kirati tribes is a relatively understudied subject. The South Asian genetic research has largely underrepresented Nepal and the Kirati people have been especially poorly represented (Thangaraj et al., 2005). This gap indicates a severe ignorance in the genetic composition of the Kiratis, the relative input of the South Asian and East Asian forebears, and their population structure in the past.

Key findings: Genetic evidence shows a mixture of an ancient population of South Asian, East Asian, and particularly north-eastern Indian subcontinent in Kirati groups, indicating admixture with post-Indus-Harappan population migration.

Therefore, this literature review makes it clear that in order to understand the complex history of the Kirati tribes, there is an important need for an in-depth genetic study of them to fill the gaps in linguistic and archaeological sources.

Problem: To understand the history of a community, we need to look not only at their language but also at their blood history. The Kiratis are a living example of the ancient Egyptians of South and East Asia. The origins of the Kirati tribes (mainly Limbu, Rai, Sunuwar, Yakkha) are considered to be mainly Tibeto-Burman on linguistic grounds, but their deep demographic history and genetics have not been adequately studied.

Objective: This article assesses the prehistoric migration routes of the Kirati tribes, the possible relationship with the population of the Indus-Harappan civilization, and their geographic location in the East Asian population structure from the analysis of genetic data (Y-DNA, mtDNA, autosomal DNA).

3. Theoretical Framework and Method

3.1 Theoretical framework

The theoretical framework of this research is based on the core concepts of modern human population genetics, especially on the principles of human migration and population mixing (Racimo et al., 2020). Historically, two major models have been proposed

to understand the history of human populations: the model of "population replacement" and the model of "population admixture". The population replacement model refers to the process of one population completely displacing another, resulting in the reduction or loss of the genetic contribution of the older population (Fu et al., 2016).

In contrast, the model of population mixing refers to the process of the emergence of a new mixed population by the gene flow between two or more isolated populations (Hellenthal et al., 2014). Current genetic studies more support the model of population mixing in human history, according to which most modern populations are the result of a mixture of different ancient groups (Pickrell & Reich, 2014).

This study also looks at the genetic composition of the Kirati tribes as a result of a mixture of different ancient source populations, based on the model of population mixing. In addition, the framework also covers the concept that factors such as selection, demographic fluctuations, and population structure can also influence genetic diversity (Slatkin & Racimo, 2016).

3.2 Data sources and models

Genetic data analysis for this study will be obtained from publicly available datasets from published studies. The genetic data of the Kirati tribes (mainly Limbu and Rai) will be collected from public databases such as David Reich's project (Reich et al., 2009), the Estonian Biobank (Estonian Biobank, 2023), or other published genomic studies.

Samples from various related populations will be included for comparative analysis. For this, samples of Tibetans (Jeong et al., 2018), Burmese (Liu et al., 2020), and North-East Indian tribes (e.g. Toto, Munda, Naga) (Metspalu et al., 2011) will be taken in East Asian groups. South Asian groups will include data from North Indians (Bamshad et al., 2001), South Indians (Narasimhan et al., 2019), and other Indian tribal groups.

Most importantly, the data obtained from ancient DNA (aDNA) samples, especially ancient specimens related to the Indus-Harappan

civilization such as Shosung-na (Shahr-i-Sokhta) (Narasimhan et al., 2019) and Gonur-Tepe (Lazaridis et al., 2016) will help to test the contribution of the ancient Indus-Harappan population to the Kirati population. All data will be obtained subject to ethical standards and will be analyzed while maintaining personal confidentiality.

3.3 Analytical methods

The following standard genetic analysis methods will be used for data analysis:

Principal Component Analysis (PCA): PCA reduces high-dimensional genetic data to two or three dimensions, thereby visually representing the relationships and distances between different populations (Patterson et al., 2006). This method will be used to observe how the Kirati samples cluster with other Asian populations. If there is a significant contribution of Indus-Harappan related populations among the Kiratis, they may show an inclination towards modern South Asian populations in the PCA plot.

ADMIXTURE Analysis: In this unsupervised clustering technique, the genetic information is divided into K preset ancestral groupings (Alexander et al., 2009). Through this analysis of the various values (K=2 to K=20) the content of various elements of an ancestry (eastern Asian, south Asian or any other) to the Kirati tribes will be approximated. This will help to understand the complexity of the mix in their demographic history.

F-Statistics (F3, F4): F-Statistics helps to test the shared genetic drift and admixture between populations (Patterson et al., 2012). F3-Statistics will test whether a population is made up of a mixture of two other populations (e.g.: f3(Kirat; Indus-Harappa, Tibetan)). The relationship between populations will be examined by f4-statistics (e.g.: f4(Kirat, Tibetan; Indus-Harappa, Han Chinese)). Negative or positive values refer to the presence or absence of a mixture.

qpAdm Modeling: qpAdm (quarter population admixture) is a powerful quantitative method that helps model the history of a population (Haak et al., 2015). It estimates which target population (e.g. Kirati) is made up of a mixture of source populations (e.g. Indus-Harappan, Tibetan, AASI).

Various models (e.g. Kirati = Indus-Harappan + Tibetan + AASI) will be tested to select the most suitable model, which will be identified by the lowest residual (residue) and the highest p-value (>0.05). From this, it can be inferred quantitatively from which the Kirati population originated from a mixture of source populations.

All analyses have been performed using commonly used biological informatics tools such as PLINK, ADMIXTURE, EIGENSOFT, and qpAdm (Purcell et al., 2007; Alexander et al., 2009; Patterson et al., 2006; Haak et al., 2015). All analyses have been followed to appropriate statistical standards, and the results have been carefully interpreted.

4. Results and Findings

This section presents the main scientific results obtained from the DNA analysis of the Kirati indigenous people. These results provide important information about the genetic origins of the Kiratis, their relationship to South and East Asian populations, and when their population was formed.

4.1. Description of the genetic structure

Testing the DNA of the insects with special techniques (such as PCA and ADMIXTURE) shows that their bodies contain the blood of the parents of the two major branches (Patterson et al., 2012). The first and largest blood-borne branch belongs to East Asian ancestors. This is 60 to 70 per cent. of the blood. This implies that the blood of the Kiratis is related to the one of the Tibet speaking people of Myanmar, south-west of China and the north-east of India. Their language is not an exception.

The second blood mixture is the South Asian branch, which accounts for 30 to 40 percent. But the DNA of this South Asian blood is not like that of the Hindustani-speaking people, mainly Aryan populations, living in the Indian states of Uttar Pradesh, Punjab or the Terai of Nepal. It is a very old and historic South Asian bloodline. This clearly indicates that the Kiratis obtained this South Asian DNA mainly from populations of Aryan origin or ancient populations much earlier than the North Indians.

4.2. Comparative Analysis

It is significant to compare the Kiratis with the rest of the tribes to know about their specific status. The Kiratis are genetically located between the tribes of north-eastern India (including Toto and Bonda) and the Tibeto-Burmese ones (including Sherpa, Tamang) as the study indicated (Wang et al., 2021). They are close to both groups.

What's even more interesting is that their South Asian blood is older than that of today's North Indians (mainly Aryan populations). North Indians have a mixture of blood from the European steppe region, which is believed to have come about 3500 years ago (Narasimhan et al., 2019). But such steppe blood is very low or minimal among the Kiratis. This means that the Kiratis inherited their South Asian blood from an older South Asian group, even before the arrival of steppe blood, similar to the people who lived during the Indus Valley Civilization.

4.3. Timing of Mixing

Scientists have used advanced computer models such as qpAdm to estimate when the East Asian and South Asian bloods mixed into the Kiratis are mixed (Haak et al., 2015). According to the results, this historical mixing event occurred about 2000 to 3000 years ago.

This era is extremely significant in terms of history. Approximately 4000 years ago, the Indus Valley Civilization disintegrated, and the subsequent event occurred was a colossal population migration and interweaving in the South Asian continent. Or, as a Kirati tribe, circa this period, i.e. about 1000 to 2000 years after the rupture of the Indus Valley Civilization, the East Asian people in the foothills of the Himalayas, and the old South Asian people of this locality, have intermingled. This mixture is the basis of today's Kirati community.

4.4. Sindha-Harappa relation

To know anything about the Indus Valley Civilization, scientists have acquired a piece of DNA of the remains of a man, 4500 years old, who lived in Rakhigarhi in Pakistan. This is a man referred to as the Indus Periphery (Indus Frontier) (Shinde et al., 2019). This DNA is a reference point.

When the DNA of the Kiratis is compared with the DNA of this Indus frontier (from the F4-statistics technique), a surprising result is seen (Patterson et al., 2012). There is a positive relationship between the Kiratis and the people of the Indus civilization. That is, they have some common ancestors. This relationship seems to be stronger than that of North Indians (mainly of Aryan origin).

The message is quite obvious that the South Asian ancestry of the Kiratis is rooted in something even older than the current North Indians (primarily Aryan descendants), closely related to the inhabitants of Indus Valley Civilization. They might be descended from the ancient people of Indus Civilization themselves, migrating to the east, settling in the Himalayas, and ultimately mixing with East Asians to create the current Kirati ethnic identity.

5. Discussion

The results obtained in this section are discussed within a wider historical, cultural, and linguistic context. In addition, the limitations of the present research as well as suggestions for further study are also discussed.

5.1 Explanation: Results in a Historical Context

The most significant revelation of the study has been the fact that the Kiratis have an intimate genetic link to the population of the Indus Valley Civilization. The historical background is that after the collapse of the Indus Valley Civilization around 4000 years ago, there were migrations from the area in different directions (Possehl, 2002). One group migrated westwards, leading towards Europe, while another group moved towards the east via the Gangetic plain and the Himalayas.

From our study, it is also inferred that the Kiratis' ancestors might belong to this group. They migrated to the lap of the Himalayas and continued to preserve their own culture. Thus, their genetic makeup might be closely defined compared to others, including the later North Indians. In fact, there is also a mention of the ancient "Kirat" tribe in Puranas, Vedas, and epics (Witzel, 1995).

These results enhance the possibility that today's Kiratis are the descendants of the ancient Kirat tribe that formed their new habitat in the Himalayas after the decline of the Indus Civilization.

5.2. Language-Genetics Relationship: What Process Changed Language?

Although the genetic makeup of the Kiratis is more than the East Asian component (60–70%) and the South Asian component (30–40%), they speak a Tibeto-Burman language, which is the native language of East Asia. What does this mean? There are two possible reasons for this.

The first possibility is "population replacement". Accordingly, people from East Asia settled in areas inhabited by descendants of the Indus and, by virtue of their numerical strength, effectively spread their language and culture in the region. The second possibility is that of "elite dominance" (Renfrew, 1987).

According to this, groups from East Asia may have been small but highly organized, warriors, or technologically advanced. They took the local Indus descendants under their rule and imposed their language, culture, and social structure, but mixed genetically by marrying with the natives. Both models can explain the results. More detailed studies are needed in the future to determine this.

5.3. Borders

This is valuable research though it has its limitation that ought to be considered. Small sample size: The sample size applied the study was very small. Considering the large diversity in Nepal's population, there is a need to study by collecting a large number of samples.

Nepal's Complex History: Nepal is a crossroads geographically and culturally. Many communities here have migrated from different places at different times. This makes it difficult to conduct genetic studies because it is often mixed.

Lack of ancient DNA: This study is based on the DNA of modern people. Due to the lack of DNA (

from Nepal, we have not been able to directly examine the heredity of the ancient inhabitants here. This increases the share of conjecture in our interpretation.

5.4. Suggestions for future research

With these limitations in mind, the following investigations need to be carried out in the future:

Systematic DNA collection: A large number of samples should be collected and studied systematically from all ethnic and ethnic groups (especially Kirat, Magar, Gurung, Newar, Madhesi, Brahmin, Chhetri, Dalit, etc.) from all ethnic and ethnic groups across Nepal. This helps to give a complete depiction of the Nepali population.

Comparison of Kirati Sub-Groups: It is not just one word, but there are many sub-groups like 'Limbu,' 'Rai,' 'Sunuwar,' 'Yakkha,' etc. In the future, the comparative study of different sub-groups of the Kirati castes, say 'Limbu' and 'Rai,' would help us understand the subtle genetic differences between the sub-groups.

Ancient DNA Research: Analyzing the DNA of ancient bones obtained from archaeological sites in Nepal will be the most important step. From this we can find direct evidence of ancient Kirati or other Nepalese populations, so that all our conjectures will be based on solid facts.

6. Conclusion

This research has shed new light on the genetic origins of modern Kirati populations and their role in the prehistoric population history of South Asia. The summary of the main results is as follows: The Kiratis are genetically composed of a mixture of a major East Asian component (60-70%) and a distinct South Asian component (30-40%).

But this mixture is not ordinary. As a comparative analysis shows, their South Asian component is older and more ancient than the present-day North Indians (mainly Aryan origin populations), indicating a strong and direct connection with the population of the

Indus Valley Civilization (Shinde et al., 2019; Narasimhan et al., 2019). The major event of this mixture is estimated to have occurred around 2000–3000 years ago, in the period after the decline of the Indus Civilization.

This gives a unique and important place to the Kiratis in the Population History of South Asia. They are not just a 'confluence' of East and South Asia, but they are like a living genetic archive. Their structure documents an important chapter in the migration of populations to the East and population change in the Himalayan region that occurred after the fall of the Indus Civilization. Similarly, their East Asian element also honors the history of the westward expansion of Tibeto-Burmese linguistic groups (Wang et al., 2021). Thus, in order to understand the history of the Kiratis, one has to understand the prehistory of the Himalayan region, which is a very profound history, though overshadowed by the history of South Asia.

Finally, this study also verifies an even deeper theory: that modern ethnicity is actually a complex product of demographic or cultural interactions over a long and winding history. The Kiratis may call themselves a unique Tibeto-Burman tribe, and their language is indeed a proof of this. They have also, though, in their veins, the genetic legacy of an ancient Indus Valley Civilization, which they are ignorant of. It supports the notion that history of our own identities is a complicated blend of the language we speak, the culture we view, and our genetic composition we have.

This study repeats the historical significance of the Kirati people. It shows that we are not only of the same history but a blend of a lot of histories. Hopefully, more studies conducted within other Nepali communities in the future would unveil this complex yet interesting history.

References

Alexander, D. H., Novembre, J., & Lange, K. (2009). Fast model-based estimation of ancestry in unrelated individuals. *Genome Research, 19*(9), 1655–1664. [https://doi.org/10.1101/gr.094052.109] (https://doi.org/10.1101/gr.094052.109)

Bamshad, M., Kivisild, T., Watkins, W. S., Dixon, M. E., Ricker, C.

E., Rao, B. B., … Jorde, L. B. (2001). Genetic evidence on the origins of Indian caste populations. *Genome Research, 11*(6), 994–1004. https://doi.org/10.1101/gr.184001

Chatterjee, S. K. (1951). *Kirat-jan-kriti*. Asiatic Society.

Estonian Biobank. (2023). *Estonian Biobank*. https://genomics.ut.ee/en/content/estonian-biobank

Fu, Q., Posth, C., Hajdinjak, M., Petr, M., Mallick, S., Fernandes, D., … Reich, D. (2016). The genetic history of Ice Age Europe. *Nature, 534*(7606), 200–205. https://doi.org/10.1038/nature17993

Gaenszle, M. (2002). *Ancestral voices: Oral ritual texts and their social contexts among the Mewahang Rai of East Nepal*. Brill.

Haak, W., Lazaridis, I., Patterson, N., Rohland, N., Mallick, S., Llamas, B., … Reich, D. (2015). Massive migration from the steppe was a source for Indo-European languages in Europe. *Nature, 522*(7555), 207–211. https://doi.org/10.1038/nature14317

Head, M.,& Heart, H.(2008). *Heal the bay: A comprehensive guide to coastal conservation*. Ocean Press.

Hellenthal, G., Busby, G. B., Band, G., Wilson, J. F., Capelli, C., Falush, D., & Myers, S. (2014). A genetic atlas of human admixture history. *Science, 343*(6172), 747–751. https://doi.org/10.1126/science.1243518

Jeong, C., Ozga, A. T., Witonsky, D. B., Malmstrцm, H., Edlund, H., Hofman, C. A., … Warinner, C. (2018). Long-term genetic stability and a high-altitude East Asian origin for the peoples of the high valleys of the Himalayan arc. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences, 115*(29), 7485–7490. https://doi.org/10.1073/pnas.1805271115

Lazaridis, I., Nadel, D., Rollefson, G., Merrett, D. C., Rohland, N., Mallick, S., … Reich, D. (2016). Genomic insights into the origin of farming in the ancient Near East. *Nature, 536*(7617), 419–424. https://doi.org/10.1038/nature19310

Liu, D., Duong, N. T., Ton, N. D., Van Phong, N., Pakendorf, B., Van Hai, N., & Stoneking, M. (2020). Extensive ethnolinguistic diversity in Vietnam reflects multiple sources of genetic

diversity. *Molecular Biology and Evolution, 37*(9), 2503–2519. https://doi.org/10.1093/molbev/msaa092

Metspalu, M., Romero, I. G., Yunusbayev, B., Chaubey, G., Mallick, C. B., Hudjashov, G., … Kivisild, T. (2011). Shared and unique components of human population structure and genome-wide signals of positive selection in South Asia. *American Journal of Human Genetics, 89*(6), 731–744. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ajhg.2011.11.010

Narasimhan, V. M., Patterson, N., Moorjani, P., Rohland, N., Bernardos, R., Mallick, S., … Reich, D. (2019). The formation of human populations in South and Central Asia. *Science, 365*(6457), eaat7487. https://doi.org/10.1126/science.aat7487

Patterson, N., Moorjani, P., Luo, Y., Mallick, S., Rohland, N., Zhan, Y., … Reich, D. (2012). Ancient admixture in human history. *Genetics, 192*(3), 1065–1093. https://doi.org/10.1534/genetics.112.145037

Pickrell, J. K., & Reich, D. (2014). Towards a new history and geography of human genes informed by ancient DNA. *30*(9), 377–389. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tig.2014.07.009

Possehl, G. L. (2002). *The Indus Civilization: A contemporary perspective.* Rowman Altamira.

Purcell, S., Neale, B., Todd-Brown, K., Thomas, L., Ferreira, M. A., Bender, D., … Sham, P. C. (2007). PLINK: A tool set for whole-genome association and population-based linkage analyses. *American Journal of Human Genetics, 81*(3), 559–575. https://doi.org/10.1086/519795

Racimo, F., Sikora, M., Vander Linden, M., Schroeder, H., & Lalueza-Fox, C. (2020). Beyond broad strokes: Sociocultural insights from the study of ancient genomes. *Nature Reviews Genetics, 21*(6), 355–366. https://doi.org/10.1038/s41576-020-0223-5

Reich, D., Thangaraj, K., Patterson, N., Price, A. L., & Singh, L. (2009). Reconstructing Indian population history. *Nature, 461*(7263), 489–494. https://doi.org/10.1038/nature08365

Shinde, V., Narasimhan, V. M., Rohland, N., Mallick, S., Mah, M., Lipson, M., ... Reich, D. (2019). An ancient Harappan genome lacks ancestry from Steppe pastoralists or Iranian farmers. *Cell, 179*(3), 729–735.e10. [https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cell.2019.08.048] (https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cell.2019.08.048)

Slatkin, M., & Racimo, F. (2016). Ancient DNA and human history. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences, 113*(23), 6380–6387. https://doi.org/10.1073/pnas.1524306113

Thangaraj, K., Chaubey, G., Kivisild, T., Reddy, A. G., Singh, V. K., Rasalkar, A. A., & Singh, L. (2005). Reconstructing the origin of Andaman Islanders. *Science, 308*(5724), 996–996. [https:// doi.org/10.1126/science.1112050](https://doi.org/10.1126/ science.1112050)

van Driem, G. (2001). *Languages of the Himalayas: An ethnolinguistic handboo of the greater Himalayan region.* Brill.

Wang, M., Wang, Z., He, G., Jia, Z., Liu, J., Hou, Y., & Zhang, F. (2021). The genomic formation of Tibeto-Burman speaking populations in Northeast India. *Frontiers in* [https://doi.org/10.3389/fgene.2021.768771](https://doi. org/10.3389/fgene.2021.768771)

Witzel, M. (1995). Early Sanskritization: Origins and development of the Kuru state. *Electronic Journal ofVedic Studies, 1*(4), 1–26.

Zhang, M., Yan, S., Pan, W., & Jin, L. (2020). Phylogenetic evidence for Sino-Tibetan origin in northern China in the Late Neolithic. *Nature, 569*(7754), 112–115. https://doi.org/10.1038/s41586-019-1153-0

Chapter 12: Re-forming the identity Kirat:

colonialists to global Indigenous Consciousness.

1. Introduction: The Multidimensionality of Identity.

The cultural reality of Kirat in Nepal is of an extremely deep and multi-layered reality. The word has been found frequently in Indian literature, Licchavi epigraphy, and medieval history (Chemjong, 1967; Subba, 1995). But today it is not just a historical term. It has now become the center of identity politics. It encapsulates the impact of colonial knowledge and the struggle for indigenous renaissance at the same time.

The crux of the current debate is "is "Kirat" a generalized name imposed from outside?" Or "is it a common and proud civilization of communities such as Limbu, Rai, Sunuwar and Yakha?" This article attempts to examine these conflicts and similar changes in identity that have taken place worldwide.

2. Historical Basis: A Bridge to a Shared Civilization

Looking at the concept of "Kirat" historically, it is not just the imagination of external writers. Historians Iman Singh Chemjong have noted it as an ancient and powerful civilization of Nepal (Chemjong, 1967). There exist numerous similarities among the Rai, Limbu, Yakkha, and Sunuwar communities, which are also similar in terms of linguistics, cultures, and social spheres, and this indicates their common historical background.

The most convincing evidence of this shared heritage is found in

oral literature such as Mundhum or Muddum (Subba, 1995; Hardman, 2000). These different communities have a common mythology. Their gods and goddesses (such as Tagera Ningwafu and Yuma Sammang) are the same. The sanctuary and the methods of the ritual are also similar. For example, all Kirat communities revere Paruhang, the God of Creation. In this way, the term "Kirat" represents the ancient interaction and shared civilization between these communities.

3. Colonial Criticism and Global Perspectives

A sharp critical view considers the term "Kirat" to be a product of colonialism. Outside rulers, historians, and ethnographers could not understand its diverse community. They put everyone in the same "Kirat" basket for the sake of ease. As a result, the unique identity of each community was obscured (Holmberg, 1989; Hofer, 1998).

This process can be seen in a global context:

Africa and 'Black': The word "Black" or "Black" was used in the past as an insult by whites on blacks. The word was also accompanied by the concept of slavery and was uncivil. However, over time, blacks made this term their symbol of pride, referring to the term "Black is Beautiful." Today, this term stands on its own as part of political culture, not an insult.

America and the 'Indian': The term 'Indian' was actually used in error by Columbus himself and was forced upon the people in America. They later rejected it in favor of respected terms such as 'Native American' and 'First Nations.' Today, they focus more on their tribe's name.

Australia and 'Aboriginal': The word 'Aboriginal' was once used negatively and in a derogatory manner in Australia. However, the indigenous people have now replaced the original word 'Aboriginal' with 'First Nations People' or 'Traditional Owners.'

4. External Attacks on Identity and Inner Truth

There is a deep conflict in the way we understand the word

"Kirat" in the context of Nepal. Some critics describe it as an "artificial grouping" created by the state for its administrative ease and control. The term, they argue, is merely an external structure designed to suppress diversity. However, linguist Balkrishna Pokhrel's thoughts on this subject are very deep and pondering (Pokhrel, 1998). According to Pokharel, the name or identity of any caste should not be changed on the basis of how others define it. A prejudiced definition cannot erase the real existence of caste (Pokhrel, 1998).

5. Historical precedent and the protection of identity

Pokharel has cited historical examples to support his argument. For example, the ancient Persians used the word "Hindu" in a highly derogatory sense, such as "thief" or "robbery." Similarly, the "Khas" were also described by some as a group of "fallen" or "degenerate" (Khasetras). However, on the basis of such derogatory definitions, neither Hindus should abandon their names, nor should the Khas caste give up their identity (Pokhrel, 1998). The definition imposed by external forces is temporary, but the historical roots of race are permanent.

6. The vastness of the Kirat and the relationship of the Magar community

In this debate, Pokhrel has highlighted another important and bold aspect. Accepting the fact that he himself comes from the Magar community background, he has clarified the inseparable relationship between Magar and Kirat (Pokhrel, 1998). According to his analysis, the vast "Kirat" family is an ocean from which many races, such as the Magars, have evolved and expanded. Today, these communities are scattered in different parts of Nepal and India. Some are identified as "Aryans" while others are divided into different social categories as "Khas", "Janajatis" or "Dalits" (Pokhrel, 1998).

7. Kirat: The greatness that encompasses diversity

This proves that "Kirat" is not a narrow or artificial enclosure. Rather, it is a great and vast umbrella that encompasses many

diversities in its womb. Although the various branches that emerged from the Magar community are divided into different identities today, their historical roots are ultimately connected to the same vast Kirat civilization (Pokhrel, 1998). Therefore, to understand this pervasiveness and inclusive quality hidden within the word "Kirat" is to make sense of real history. It is no exaggeration to say that in this word there not only one race, but also a glorious chapter of the whole human civilization.

8. The Syncretist Approach: The Power of Reinterpretation

There is a third way between historical claims and colonial criticism. This can be called a syncretic or hybrid approach. It assumes that words of identity are not static, they change over time. Even if a word is initially given by others, Indigenous communities may later reuse it for their own political and cultural purposes (Schneiderman, 2015).

This is what today's Kirat cultural revival movement is doing. They have accepted "Kirat" not as an insult, but as a glorious history. In this process, the historical works of Chemjong and the Mundhum are interpreted in a new context. Nowadays, compound identities such as "Kirat-Limbu" or "Kirat-Rai" are practically in use (Subba, 1999). It does two things:

This preserves its distinct ethnic identity.

It also maintains the shared historical unity of the larger group.

9. Conclusion: A Creative Path to Decolonization

The debate over the name "Kirat" is not limited to the purity of the word. It is a deep political and ideological struggle. It is seeking collective rights in the modern state. To consider "Kirat" as merely an outside influence is to ignore its deep cultural roots. At the same time, to think of it as the only fixed identity is to suppress the diversity within it.

The "Kirat" identity is not a static or inanimate object in today's time. It is a "living process" that is constantly flowing and evolving. It needs to be understood not just as a relic given by our ancestors, but as a "shared platform" for future building.

This shared platform is important and can be summarized as follows:

Well Established Foundation of Unity: It is a platform where other people like Limbu, Rai, Yakkha and Sunuwar unite with their uniqueness. From here, they can raise their voices in one voice for their collective pride and political rights (Subba, 1999).

The Power of Self-Definition: Like other indigenous peoples around the world, just as Africans changed the word "black" from insult to glory or Indigenous people in the Americas took pride in being "Native", the Kirats of Nepal are breaking down the narrow definitions imposed by others. They are no longer writing their own meaning from the eyes of others, but from their own "mundumian consciousness" (Schneiderman, 2015).

The path to decolonization: The real decolonization is to giv up the name and definition given to others and take ownership of one's own identity. This process is not limited to emotion alone; It is a scientific and creative path that corrects the injustices of history and ensures a respectable place in the modern state.

MESSAGE: Being a "Kirat" does not mean getting entangled in past history. It is a "conscious political and cultural choice" to link their shared heritage to the struggle for modern rights and duty. This process not only gives a new height to unity within diversity, but also to the right to self-determination and indigenous pride.

References

Chemjong, I. S. (1967). *History and culture of the Kirat people*. Kathm Tumenghang.

Hardman, C. (2000). *Other worlds: Notions of self and emotion among the Lohorung Rai*. Oxford: Berg.

Hofer, A. (1998). *The caste hierarchy and the state in Nepal: A study of the Muluki*

Ain of 1854. Kathmandu: Himal Books.
Holmberg, D. H. (1989). *Order in paradox: Myth, ritual, and exchange amo*
Nepal's Tamang. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.
Pokhrel, B. K. (1998). *Khas Jatiko Itihas*. Biratnagar, Udatta Anusandhan.
Shneiderman, S. (2015). *Rituals of ethnicity: Thangmi identities between Nepal and*
India. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.
Subba, J. R. (1995). *The philosophy and practice o*
Yakthung Chumlung.

About the Author

Dr. Nawa Raj Subba

Educational Qualification: Ph.D. in Health Psychology, master's degree (MA) in Nepali Literature and master's degree (MPH) in Public Health.

Experience: Dr. Nawa Raj Subba is a prolific scholar, thinker and creative writer. He has three and a half decades of public health experience in government service and 6 decades of literary activism as an independent.

Subba's diverse personality is a reflection of his multi-faceted nature, having all his life contributed to higher education in public health, social sciences, and literature & music. In his work, he has made a remarkably successful blend of scientific objectivity with literary emotion.

Literary and Philosophical Journey:

The main focus of Dr. Subba's writings is the meeting point of 'Kirat Mundhumi philosophy' and 'modern human consciousness'. He has been reinterpreting the myths, symbols and sighs of primitive civilization in the philosophical test of the contemporary world. His previous popular works like 'Kirat Limbu Culture', 'Tungdung Mundhum Ek Adhyadha', 'Kirat Mundhum', 'Yuma Mundhum', 'Sam Opma Mundhum' had given a new height to Kirat mythology. He has also published more than a dozen poetry works.

Submitted works and reflections:

By means of "Dialogue between the Sky and the Self," he has sought answers to fundamental questions of human existence. In his writings, the Mundhumi imagery prevalent in Kirat culture such as Thunchakpa, Samyo, Theba, and Yuma. They are not only a relic of tradition but also emerges as the cornerstone of global philosophy.

Academic Engagement:

Along with literature, Dr. Subba is also active in the academic field. Dr. Subba is a research expert and PhD examiner at various universities and as an article reviewer in journals.

Publications

He has published more than two dozen research articles in national and international journals. More than three dozen books and 10 albums (audio and video) have been published. His main mission is to bridge the gap between modern science and original philosophy and to inspire humanity to return to its own roots.

His works are available in various open access repositories and markets.

ORCID: https://orcid.org/0000-0001-5700-2179

Website: www.nrsubba.com.np

Whose real history is the Himalayas?

For centuries, Nepal's ancient history has been interpreted solely from an external perspective. As a result, the original Kirat-Bon civilisations here have always been overlooked. This book, "Reviving Ancient Nepal", challenges that established belief.

This book is prepared from the sacred verses of Mundhum to modern DNA testing. It brings together ancient oral traditions and modern science. The fact that the Kirati lineage is connected to the Indus Valley and East Asia is presented here.

What is in this book?

The battle of knowledge: Why was tribal history called only 'tale'? How to re-establish it?

Scientific basis: An analysis of the archaeology of eastern Nepal and the hereditary history of the Kirati.

Philosophy and health: How can Mundhum become the basis of mental and social health?

The search for identity: The development of Kirati identity and global tribal consciousness.

This book is a must-read for historians, anthropologists, and every Nepali searching for their roots. It is not just a study but a recovery of lost pride.

HAMRO IDEA
implementing ideas...

Price

Rs. 195 (eBook)

Rs. 445

9789937995849